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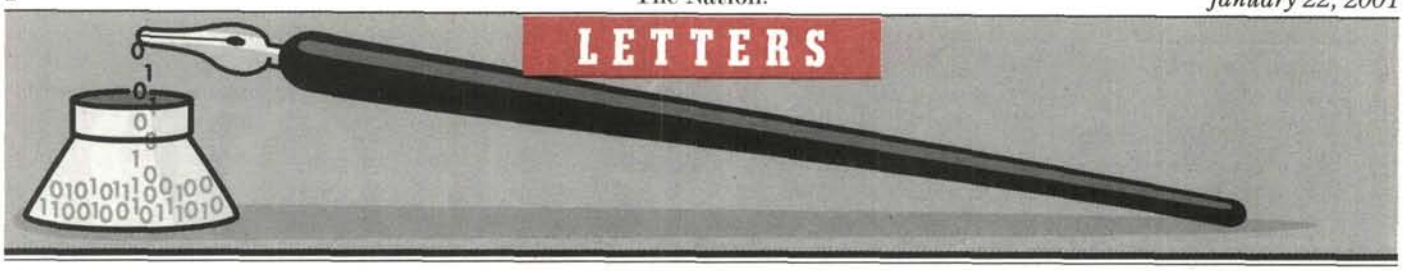

FEMINIST GENERATION GAP?

New York City

■ It certainly is flattering to have a five-page comprehensive review of our book, *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future* ["Riding the Third Wave," Dec. 11], but Michelle Jensen repeats the same pattern we critique: If it doesn't look like it did thirty years ago, it must not be feminism. The sad part of Jensen's second wave–lensed review of *Manifesta* is that she overlooked our subtitle altogether and rendered invisible the hundreds of examples of young women—their lives and activism—that are the purpose of the book. Women like Farai Chideya, Tali Edut and Sabrina Alcantara-Tan and the work of the Third Wave Foundation, Bust and WILD: For Human Rights—institutions founded and run by young women.

We don't mind the contentious review. We've had many (they have wildly different opinions about what we did right and wrong), and they prove that feminism is as various as women are. But the contrast between the exasperated academic reviewer and the dozen or so huge, totally enthusiastic crowds of young feminists that have greeted us at college campuses over the past few months makes us think that we were on the right track with *Manifesta*—even without the socialist feminist theory Jensen so craved.

AMY RICHARDS AND JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER

JENSEN REPLIES

Chicago

■ I suppose it's easier for Richards and Baumgardner to paint me as an unreconstructed second waver than to engage with the political substance of my critique. What they can't quite grip, and this is where feminist "wave theory" reveals its simple-mindedness, is that I am their cultural contemporary. I like my platform shoes, my *Dawson's Creek*, my Hitachi Magic Wand, my Butchies and my campus popularity as much as the next girl: I just don't call it politics. I don't care one whit about what feminism "looks like" (which is why their superficial inclusion of a few token women of color fails to convince me); I care deeply, however, about my generation's ability to advance a historically conscious movement to liberate all women, no matter where they may be located in structures of class, race, sexuality, nation or generation. The manifesto to consult, for a truly liberatory blueprint, is the Redstockings': "We identify with all women. We define our best interest as that of the poorest, most brutally exploited woman. We repudiate all economic, racial, educational, or status privileges that divide us from other women."

MICHELLE JENSEN

VIETNAM IN FACT & FICTION

San Luis Obispo, Calif.

■ H. Bruce Franklin in "Antiwar and Proud of It" [Dec.11] tells of the aircraft carrier Constellation's crew petitioning for Jane Fonda's antiwar road show to be allowed to perform aboard. In 1971–72 I was a Marine lieutenant out of the Air Force Academy stationed in Okinawa when Hanoi Jane's show performed in the city of Koza. It was exuberantly attended by thousands in uniform, many just back from Vietnam, as Nixon pulled the troops out. I returned to the States in '72 to resign my commission out of a sense of the evil of the man (this was pre–Watergate break-in) and increasing discordance between principle and reality, but a vehicular accident broke my back before my request cleared. Support for the antiwar movement was feverish even among the uniformed, many of whom attended the show so that they could have their pictures taken by intelligence personnel and go on record.

GREGORY C. O'KELLY

Davis, Ill.

■ I beg to differ with H. Bruce Franklin on the 1945 transport of the French military and Legionnaires to Saigon. I was on Army transport ships then. We were civilian merchant marines, not enlisted men. I doubt that the Navy would protest—that would be considered mutiny. But whoever did it, I deeply wish that Misters Truman and Nixon had listened. "They're not listening still. Perhaps they never will."

CLARENCE "BUD" OHSE

Baltimore

■ If Jerry Lembcke found "not a shred of evidence" that Vietnam vets were spat upon, it doesn't mean there was none. I am acquainted with a man who was on active duty stateside in the mid-sixties and was walking down the street of a western Massachusetts city when someone came up and spat in his face. He didn't run looking for sociologists to tell his story to, but it happened. It is good to recall and affirm the strengths of the antiwar movement. It is not good to create new distortions in the attempt to offset old ones.

KATHARINE W. RYLAARSDAM

FRANKLIN REPLIES

Newark, N.J.

■ The crews of the US ships being used to transport an invasion army to Vietnam in 1945 were indeed all in the merchant marine; it was the enlisted crewmen (i.e., nonofficers) who unanimously protested this complicity with colonialism.

While there may possibly have been isolated cases of servicepeople being spat upon, there is no contemporaneous evidence of such incidents. More important, although such behavior was never part of the antiwar movement, it is an image of antiwar protesters rampant in American culture today. Both these topics are explored with thorough documentation in my book, *Vietnam and Other American Fantasies*.

H. BRUCE FRANKLIN

BEWARE: PROGRESSIVE = DRUGGIE!

Johnson City, N.Y.

■ Jane Spencer's "Caught in the WAVE" [Dec. 4] reminded me of a recent work purporting to link high school students' interest in progressive causes to drug abuse. In *How Parents Can Help Children Live Marijuana Free*, written by University of Utah criminologist Gerald Smith and others and published by Walt Plum, "excessive preoccupation with social causes, race relations, environmental issues, etc." are listed as some of the "social signs of regular [drug] users." The sixty-plus-page booklet, distributed to parents of students in the Salt Lake City School District with the blessing of the district, prompted parents of two students to pull their children off the debate team. Students may now be targeted not only for acting or appearing different, but also for reading *The Nation*!

ALLEN LUTINS

THEY WERE PRINCIPLED IDEALISTS

Walnut Creek, Calif.

■ It may seem unappreciative for a former Communist to be critical of the relatively reasoned article on "The Right's Cold War Revision," by Ellen Schrecker and Maurice Isserman [July 24/31, "Letters," Oct. 9]. The very rules of engagement in this discussion seem to begin with the docile acceptance as received word of the outpourings of double and triple agents from Moscow's murky Venona files. Schrecker and Isserman are no exception, stating: "As Venona and the Moscow sources reveal, the [US] party recruited dozens, perhaps hundreds, of its members to spy for the Soviet Union."

Who were all these spies, and how come they were never named and prosecuted? Hoover's FBI says it had the party thoroughly infiltrated (hardly the difficult feat that melodramatic movies made it). What these FBI agents would most want to present to the Boss was proof of espionage. Never happened.

Schrecker and Isserman do American Communists the dubious favor of writing, "Acknowledging that some American Communists spied on behalf of the Soviet Union does not reduce the entire history of their movement to

(Continued on Page 24)

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VOLUME 272, NUMBER 3

IN THIS ISSUE

2 **LETTERS**

EDITORIALS & COMMENT

3 SPOIL BUSH'S PARTY

4 BLOCK ASHCROFT—I
Burt Neuborne

5 BLOCK ASHCROFT—II
Bruce Shapiro

6 ALAN CRANSTON
Jonathan Schell

7 COOL IT, WORLD
Ross Gelbspan

7 IN FACT...

COLUMNS

6 SILVER LININGS
Calvin Trillin

9 MINORITY REPORT
Powell's Secret Coup
Christopher Hitchens

10 SUBJECT TO DEBATE
Happy New Year
Katha Pollitt

ARTICLES

11 BUSH'S PHONY "BIPARTISANSHIP"
The danger: He might sell the idea, and his agenda, with the help of a few Democrats.
John Nichols

14 GEORGE BUSH'S DEMOCRATS
Jesse L. Jackson Jr.

16 BUSH'S HAMMER
House GOP whip Tom DeLay will do his best to pull the President to the right.
Robert Dreyfuss

20 UNIONS WITHOUT BORDERS
A new kind of internationalism is challenging neoliberal globalism.
David Bacon

BOOKS & THE ARTS

25 GOULD: Labored Relations: Law, Politics, and the NLRB—A Memoir
COMPA: Unfair Advantage: Workers' Freedom of Association in the United States Under International Human Rights Standards
Steve Early

28 KERSHAW: Hitler 1936–1945: Nemesis
Paul Reitter

31 CHAUDHURI: A New World
Sumana Raychaudhuri

32 YULETIDE ALL THE TIME
Eduardo Galeano

35 DREAM NOTEBOOK (poem)
Jane Hirshfield

36 IN OUR ORBIT

Cover design by Open; illustrations by Karen Caldicott

EDITORIALS

Spoil Bush's Party

Mandate or no, George W. Bush is forging ahead with Cabinet appointments, policy forums and talk of a "first 100 days." Bush and his team have assembled a Cabinet faster than any administration since Richard Nixon's, and before Bush takes the oath of office on January 20 they'll have laid the groundwork for passage of an agenda that closely resembles the worst-case scenario painted by Bush critics during the 2000 campaign.

Bush's appointments to the EPA, Interior and Energy look ready to lead a furious offensive against environmental regulation and common sense. His appointments to Labor and Justice promise an assault on choice, civil rights and worker rights. His heralded national security team looks resolutely backward to a cold war that isn't, and seems oblivious to the world as it is. No wonder the Reagan cinematic fantasy—Star Wars, missile defense—is paraded as an early priority.

Post-mortems and recriminations must now give way to action, beginning with a flood of e-mails, telegrams and letters of protest to the Capitol Hill offices not just of Republicans but of wavering Democrats who have the power to brake the Bush bandwagon. This is no time for bipartisan blather. "Those who are with the civil rights agenda must not choose collegiality over civil rights and social justice," says the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Democratic members of Congress need to know that they cannot expect the core of their party—women, minorities, workers—to turn out on Election Day only to have their interests abandoned the day after, and that those who surrender in this fight will not be forgotten and not be forgiven. We must make it clear that we are not prepared to refight the battles of the last decades on basic human rights. We are not prepared to surrender to another era of race-bait politics, or to send poor women back to the alleys for abortions, or to lay waste our environment in the interest of big oil.

The frontline troops of this movement are already mobilizing. Civil rights groups and others will take to the streets of Washington starting on January 15, Martin Luther King Day, and continuing through the Inauguration; they will raise necessary questions about the legitimacy of Bush's election and press for voting reforms that guarantee more representative results in the future. The AFL-CIO has pledged to oppose archconservative John Ashcroft's nomination for Attorney General, as have People for the American Way and the Black Leadership Forum (see comments on Ashcroft on pages 4 and 5). Planned Parenthood and the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League have joined that challenge while also promising to oppose Health and Human Services Department nominee Tommy Thompson, who presided over a severe curtailment of access to reproductive rights as governor of Wisconsin.

But the real work must go on at the grassroots—starting now and continuing up to and including the 2002 elections. (For more information on protests and ways to get involved, go to Counter-Inaugural Calendar at www.thenation.com). It is only by exerting constant upward pressure that we can explode the myth of bipartisanship and prevent the Bush presidency from rolling over the will of the great majority of Americans.

Congress cannot salute Dr. King's dream and then go on to pass the dream-busting Bush agenda. Beginning with the Bush nominations, every lawmaker on Capitol Hill must be challenged to stand up, as Dr. King did, for justice.

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COMMENT

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Block Ashcroft—I

John Ashcroft's nomination as Attorney General is the first installment on George W. Bush's enormous political debt to the radical right. Remember back in early February when Bush's campaign for the Republican nomination was on the ropes? John McCain had beaten him badly in New Hampshire and had just broken through Bush's attempt to keep him off the New York State primary ballot. The McCain campaign was on fire in South Carolina, and the so-called Bush firewall in Michigan was collapsing. A loss in South Carolina would have all but ended the Bush campaign. A shaken Bush did what he had to in order to win there—he sold his soul at Bob Jones University. The rumor was that he made a Faustian bargain with the radical right to give them the Justice Department and the federal judiciary if they would save his candidacy. Apparently it worked. Right-wing religious fundamentalists defeated McCain in South Carolina and provided the shock troops to derail him in Republican-only "closed primary" states, where McCain was cut off from his natural constituency.

After Bush secured the nomination, he seemed to signal his acceptance of the deal by praising Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. The radical right responded with a surge of support and, more important, with the gift of silence spared Bush from having to acknowledge his debt. Five members of the Supreme Court, including Scalia and Thomas, sealed the deal by anointing Bush as President-elect without the formality of his winning the election. Now the debt to the Christian right has come due.

Ordinarily, Presidents have the right to use Cabinet nominations to pay political debts. If Gore had not only won the most votes but had actually been allowed to become President, organized labor and the civil rights movement would now be lining up to collect their debts. In an ordinary presidential election, the winner enjoys the right to call the shots on policy as the political surrogate for the electoral majority. Thus, if this were an ordinary election it would be wrong to oppose John Ashcroft's nomination on political grounds. But Bush didn't win an electoral majority. He lost the national popular vote by more than 500,000 votes. He may have lost the Electoral College as well, obtaining Florida's crucial twenty-five electoral votes through a Supreme Court opinion that prevented an accurate vote count.

Don't get me wrong. George W. Bush is the President-elect. Respect for the rule of law requires us to follow the Supreme Court's ruling imposing Bush on the nation. But a President-elect who has been rejected by the majority of voters, and who may be taking office only because the Supreme Court refused to permit all the ballots to be counted in Florida, has no automatic right to saddle us with an extremist Attorney General who has just been rejected by the voters of his own state and who is pledged to wage war on behalf of a right-wing ideology that has been firmly rejected by most Americans.

Democratic senators who would ordinarily be inclined to allow the President-elect to form his Cabinet without opposition should not hesitate to oppose Ashcroft's nomination. The radical right hasn't earned control of the Justice Department, or the right to pick

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federal judges in the image of Scalia or Thomas. What President-elect Bush is entitled to from all Americans is respect for his office and cooperation in attempting to form and administer a centrist government. But there is no duty to cooperate in forming an extremist government. That is why the Democrats must use their "earned" 50-50 split in the new Senate to block the Ashcroft nomination. Not because Ashcroft is a bad man. He is, by all accounts, a decent man. Not because Ashcroft is a racist. He is, apparently, free from overt racial bias. But because he stands for terrible policies that would strike at the core of the American consensus. He stands for denying women freedom of choice. Unlike many principled foes of abortion, however, Ashcroft's reverence for human life does not prevent him from being an enthusiastic supporter of capital punishment. He stands for weakening the civil rights laws. He stands for eroding the wall between church and state. He stands for more censorship of free speech.

For once, let's have a vigorously contested confirmation hearing on Ashcroft that doesn't spiral down to character assassination. This is not about Ashcroft's competence. This is not about his honesty or his decency. It's about his politics—and whether George W. Bush has the right to impose the agenda of the radical right on a nation that has rejected it. If there is an iota of courage left in the forty-one Democratic senators it would take to sustain a filibuster, they'll rise up and say to President-elect Bush: We will not cosign the payment of your debt to the radical right by surrendering the Justice Department and the federal courts. The price for the nation is just too high. BURT NEUBORNE

Burt Neuborne is John Norton Pomeroy Professor of Law and legal director of the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University.

Block Ashcroft—II

Just how bad an Attorney General would John Ashcroft be? And is his nomination worth fighting? To answer the first question, talk to those who have experienced Ashcroft up close and personal. Like Harriet Woods, Missouri's lieutenant governor during the first of Ashcroft's two terms as that state's chief executive: She calls him "a disaster for minorities and for women." Or like retired Missouri Supreme Court Judge Charles Blackmar. Blackmar—a Republican appointee—accused Senator Ashcroft of "tampering with the judiciary" by blocking the federal court nomination of the amply qualified Missouri judge Ronnie White. Ashcroft opposed Judge White, an African-American, on the ostensible grounds that he voted against too many death sentences, leading Blackmar to this pungent assessment of the philosophy guiding Bush's chief law officer in the the crucial job of appointing federal judges: "The senator seems to take the attitude that any deviation is suspect, liberal, activist."

Ashcroft's sense of what constitutes "deviation" is broad even by the standards of the right, and his hard-line opposition to abortion isn't the half of it. The list of things Ashcroft is on record opposing is a catalogue of American social progress: contraception, school desegregation, solar energy, government assistance for woman- and minority-owned businesses, fuel efficiency standards for cars, workplace-discrimination protection for homosexuals, campaign finance reform and the nuclear test ban treaty. As governor, he even prohibited over-the-candy-counter sale of bonbons with liqueur centers.

It is African-Americans who will first take it on the chin from an Ashcroft Justice Department. As Missouri attorney general in the 1970s, Ashcroft initially honored the moderate, integrationist legacy of his mentor and predecessor, John Danforth. But he soon learned the value of playing hard-line race politics, fighting tooth and nail against desegregation of the massively unequal schools in Kansas City and St. Louis all the way to the US Supreme Court and spurning every attempt at an out-of-court settlement. Ashcroft won a tough GOP primary for governor in 1984 with attack ads accusing his opponent of being soft on desegregation. In the words of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* editorial page, he has "built a career out of opposing school desegregation...and opposing African-Americans for public office."

Reports have it that Bush's first favorite for AG was the more moderate Governor Marc Racicot of Montana—who, the story goes, was shot down by the far right. That creative spin control allows the administration-elect to play to both its flanks—deferring to the right with the nomination while assuaging moderates with the fiction that this nomination doesn't reflect Bush's deepest convictions. In fact, Ashcroft's nomination embodies one of the fundamental lessons of the first George Bush Administration: that the justice system is the arena that counts for right-wing patronage. The permanent elite of Republican technocrats like Donald Rumsfeld can have the run of the store as long as Justice turns out a steady stream of antiabortion briefs and far-right judge nominees.

Watch for a confirmation strategy that echoes fellow Danforth protégé Clarence Thomas in 1991, beginning with Ashcroft lobbying individual senators, followed by a confirmation narrative emphasizing Ashcroft's childhood—how his minister father befriended black missionaries—over the substance of Ashcroft's record as segregationist and antichoice absolutist. Once again, leading the Senate Judiciary Committee Democrats will be Joe Biden, whose vanity and strategic incompetence contributed mightily to Thomas's narrow confirmation. Biden, reprising his fatal 1991 indecision, has declared he is "inclined" to support Ashcroft.

So is this a nomination worth fighting? Other Bush Cabinet nominees also pose direct threats to specific constituencies, but there is real urgency to laying down a marker on Ashcroft. The threat his nomination poses cuts across constituencies and issues, and the stakes are every bit as high as in the Clarence Thomas and Robert Bork Supreme Court nomination fights. The Justice Department has expanded its authority as has no other agency in recent years. Through appointments to the federal bench, Supreme Court arguments and priorities, the appointment of US Attorneys and the enforcement of civil rights and antitrust law, any Attorney General can change the country in profound ways. All the more so with Ashcroft: not just because of his regressive constitutional views but because Bush appears likely to vest more power in his advisers than any President in memory.

And this is a fight that is winnable, despite Biden's early bumbling and the irrelevant conventional wisdom that the Senate will defer to one of its own. (Remember John Tower, whose Sen-

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COMMENT

ate record could not rescue his nomination as Reagan Defense Secretary?) The Clinton impeachment hearings and trial showed repeatedly that most Americans have little patience with moral extremists like Ashcroft, and it shouldn't take much to convince a broad segment of the public that he is out of touch. Civil liberties and corporate regulation have a currency and a constituency they lacked when public-interest groups beat Bork in 1986. With public support for the death penalty falling, with even GOP governors questioning the wisdom of the drug war, with Republican Supreme Court Justices reaffirming *Roe v. Wade* and a Republican Congress softening the Cuba embargo, Ashcroft looks like a dinosaur, the anachronistic spawn of Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms.

Besides, whatever the outcome, a fight against Ashcroft will generate rather than expend political capital for civil rights and civil liberties advocates. Democrats gained from the Bork and Thomas confirmation fights as the public became educated about the real agenda of conservatives and as Beltway-bound liberal lobbies reconnected to grassroots constituencies. There is every reason to think Ashcroft could be defeated—and even if he is not, fighting his confirmation could lay the foundation for a new coalition, a shadow Justice Department that will dog the Bush Administration's every judicial nomination and every reversal of civil rights. This is no time to roll over. BRUCE SHAPIRO

CALVIN TRILLIN

SILVER LININGS

I

Now Ashcroft will decide who's on the bench.
The civil rights division will retrench—
Unless it finds that civil rights entails
Some breaks at last for pure white Christian males.
The jobs and housing efforts that depend
On Justice will on Ashcroft's watch all end.
And solemn friend-of-court briefs will be filed:
"Abortion simply means to kill a child."
One comfort lasts, as dreams of justice shatter:
Ralph Nader said it really wouldn't matter.

II

Gale Norton thinks there's no place you can spoil
If what you do to it produces oil.
She'd like to see no regulations left;
She thinks controls on property is theft.
Emissions? Who should monitor their flow?
To her it's clear: the firm's own CEO.
So drillers drill. Here's what Interior's got:
A protégée of James (The Crackpot) Watt.
Don't tear your hair and curse those who begat her:
Remember: Nader said it wouldn't matter.

Alan Cranston

After retiring from the Senate in 1993, Alan Cranston, who died on New Year's Eve of the new millennium in the home of his son Kim, began a new career that was as important as the one he left behind as a four-term senator from California and majority whip. He embarked on a campaign to seize the opportunity afforded by the end of the cold war to abolish nuclear weapons. His opposition to nuclear weapons was long-standing. He first adopted the cause as president of the United World Federalists in the late 1940s. As a senator, he worked to advance the control and reduction of nuclear arms. In 1984 in a brief run at the presidency, he made the issue the centerpiece of his campaign. After leaving the Senate he worked on the issue first as chairman of the Gorbachev Foundation and then as the president of the Global Security Institute, which he founded. The most important of its accomplishments was to put together, as part of a new coalition of groups called Project Abolition, the Appeal for Responsible Security, Appeal for Responsible Security, which calls for abolition and steps toward that end, and was signed, at Cranston's urging, by such notable people as Paul Nitze, Gen. Charles Horner and President Jimmy Carter. The appeal will be circulated by Project Abolition as the foundation of a wider nuclear abolition campaign in the United States in the months to come.

It was in this work to eliminate nuclear weapons that I got to know him and came to be, I believe I can say, his friend. He possessed a modesty that would have been notable in any human being but was astonishing in an elected politician. On his answering machine he was "Alan," as he was to most who knew him. The human being not only had survived the official, it had come through without any detectable distortion whatever. Self-reference—not to speak of bluster or bragging—was at the zero level, as were all other forms of showmanship. Equally, there was zero variation in his manner toward the small and the great, the scruffy and the expensively suited.

Sometimes I wondered how a four-term senator could have managed this, and in the course of many days of travel and meetings together, I believe I came to understand at least one reason. It wasn't that he underrated himself or failed to appreciate the importance of his position. He had, for instance, a nation-spanning Rolodex and entree at every level of American life, and used these to the hilt in the cause. It was that his concentration, which was intense, was entirely on the work at hand. At every single meeting I attended with him, he made something happen. He passed along news, received news, asked for a further meeting, arranged one for someone else, won support for a project or set a new project in motion—a job for someone, a research organization, an appeal, a television program, a film. He moved as swiftly as he moved quietly. The work was hard, intellectually as well as practically, and there was just no time for wasted motion, blather or nonsense. At meetings he was silent most of the time. He kept so

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imperturbably still—a gaunt Buddha—that sometimes I thought, "Well, a man of his eminence doesn't have to attend to every last word of every inconsequential meeting"—only to hear him speak up quietly at the end, summing up what had been said, making sense of it and offering suggestions, which usually formed the basis for what was done. Not for nothing had he seven times been elected Senate Democratic whip.

What was true of his manner was true of his mind: It was, even in his 80s, fresh, resilient, receptive, reasonable, sensible, constructive, unburdened by conventional wisdom, unencrusted by habit and crowned with what can only be called wisdom.

The work, which absorbed all his professional life, was reducing nuclear weapons until they were gone. There was never a more practical and effective man than Alan Cranston, and none with a keener or more accurate sense of what was possible in the political world and what was not, yet his opposition to nuclear weapons was above all moral. At an event launching the Appeal for Responsible Security, he said of nuclear deterrence, "This may have been necessary during the cold war; it is not necessary forever. It is not acceptable forever. I say it is unworthy of our nation, unworthy of any nation; it is unworthy of civilization." Rarely in recent American political life have common sense, effectiveness, persistence and vision been combined in one person as they were in him. Nothing can replace him as a friend. As for the work—the force of his example, if we have the strength to follow it, must make good our loss.

JONATHAN SCHELL

Jonathan Schell, The Nation*'s peace and disarmament correspondent, is the Harold Willens Peace Fellow at the Nation Institute.*

Cool It, World

After three years of diplomatic fatigue, the United States put delegates from 170 countries out of their misery at the latest round of climate talks at The Hague in November by scuttling the negotiations and, in the process, thumbing its nose at nature as well as at the rest of the world. The good news is that the collapse of the global warming talks may set the stage for a truly transformative initiative to pacify the inflamed climate and, at the same time, dramatically expand the global economy.

The world's glaciers are melting, the oceans are heating up, tropical diseases are migrating north and the weather is becoming increasingly destructive. All that is the result of a 1-degree increase in temperature over the past century. By contrast, the world will warm by up to 11 degrees this century, according to the United

In Fact . . .

CLINTON AND THE ICC

Clinton's eleventh-hour signature on the International Criminal Court treaty was overdue, but at least it got the United States inside the door before the bell. It gives the American public an opportunity to debate this potential advance in international law. Clinton's timing was very smart: He boosted his "heir to Jimmy Carter" world-statesman role while insuring, as he says, that the United States can play a part in further discussions on rules of the court, its scope and procedures, though his signature is not binding on the country. After it attains sixty ratifications the extant treaty will go into effect. Bush's spokesman says the treaty is "flawed" and should not be submitted for ratification. Clinton's delay, which rose from a desire to appease the Pentagon and Senator Jesse Helms, was emblematic of an endemic flaw in his Administration's foreign policy—a reluctance to make the case to the American people for passage of the ICC, as well as other progressive causes like the landmine treaty, UN dues, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Contrast its failure to place its formidable persuasive powers behind those measures with its all-out drives to win approval of NAFTA and Chinese entry into the World Trade Organization.

FREE LEONARD PELTIER

American Indian activist Leonard Peltier has served twenty-four years in prison after being convicted of the murder of two FBI agents. Even the US prosecutor admits that Peltier's guilt can't be proved, in a case that relied on witness coercion, tainted ballistics tests and improper extradition procedures. Call the White House (202-456-1111) and urge Clinton to grant clemency; sign the petition campaign posted on the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee website at www.freepeltier.org.

LINDSAY: ONE LAST HURRAH

Doug Ireland writes: None of the obituaries on former New York City Mayor John Lindsay, who died December 19 at 79, captured the full meaning and flavor of his stunning 1969 re-election victory. A Republican when first anointed mayor by the voters in 1965, he was dumped by his party four years later, for being too pro-black and for criticizing then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Lindsay, the best friend African-Americans had ever had in City Hall and a fervent critic of America's war in Vietnam, won re-election in '69, thanks to an independent citizens' campaign organized by Bella Abzug (later elected a Congresswoman with Lindsay's strong support) and RFK adviser Ronnie Eldridge (now a City Councilwoman). The remarkable pro-Lindsay coalition that year brought together antiracist Democrats, blacks and Hispanics and the antiwar movement—Lindsay hammered "the hidden Vietnam war budget of New York City," showing how much the conflict was costing Big Apple residents specifically and urban America generally. Lindsay may not have been a whiz as administrator, but the touchstone of his mayoralty was that for the first time in the city's history, neighborhoods were listened to, their identities and grassroots organizations strengthened as a matter of city policy. No other former New York City mayor has ever died broke. Lindsay, a scrupulously honest chap, did.

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COMMENT

Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The United States killed the Hague negotiations by insisting on meeting its Kyoto goal (reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, primarily coal and oil, to 7 percent below 1990 levels) simply by planting trees and buying cheap emissions credits from poor countries. But the escalating pace of climate change makes it clear that a reliance on carbon-trading and tree-planting is nothing more than an expression of institutional denial of the magnitude of the problem. The EU, frustrated by US foot-dragging, refused to cave, demanding that Washington meet at least half its obligation through real domestic reductions in oil and coal burning. The result was a diplomatic meltdown.

Abandoning the minimalist goals of the Kyoto Protocol, many European nations are now taking their cues from science: The climate crisis requires 70 percent cuts in a very short time if civilization is to avoid the catastrophic effects of global warming. Britain, which in November suffered its worst flooding in centuries, will cut emissions 60 percent in the next fifty years. Holland, faced with a devastating sea-level rise, will cut emissions 80 percent over the next forty years. Germany is contemplating 50 percent cuts.

The US obstructionism also ignores a recent sea change in attitudes among Congressional Republicans, corporate leaders and multinational oil companies. Three years ago, Nebraska's Senator Chuck Hagel co-sponsored a resolution not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Today Hagel concedes the science of global warming. Last year, Indiana's Richard Lugar and James Woolsey, former head of the CIA, called for the United States to begin reducing coal and oil use by substituting energy from agricultural wastes.

Oil companies, with the exception of ExxonMobil, are similarly moving to confront the crisis. Shell has created a new, $500 million core company for renewable energy. Its director was recently appointed to head a new G-8 task force on clean energy. Texaco is putting serious resources into renewables. British Petroleum, with major solar investments, now advertises that BP stands for "Beyond Petroleum." In the auto industry, William Clay Ford recently declared an end to "the 100-year reign of the internal combustion engine." That declaration follows Ford's participation in a $1 billion joint venture with Daimler-Chrysler and Mazda to bring fuel-cell-powered cars to market in three years. (These initiatives are partly "greenwashing," aimed at pacifying environmentalists, but they also reflect preparations by oil and auto companies to maintain their role as prominent players in a new energy economy.) Most striking, at the World Economic Forum in Davos at the end of January, the CEOs of the 1,000 largest corporations voted climate change the most urgent issue facing humanity today.

What growing numbers of corporate leaders understand is that a global transition to clean energy would create millions of jobs, especially in poor countries. It would transform dependent, impoverished countries into robust trade partners, substantially expanding global markets. It would make the renewable industry a central engine of economic growth.

Ironically, the corporate powers behind the Bush administration may prove more alert to the wealth-creation potential of an energy transition than Gore. While Christie Whitman, expected to be the new EPA administrator, didn't know the difference between ozone depletion and global warming (and questioned the science behind both), Paul O'Neill, the new Treasury Secretary, has expressed serious concerns about the climate—and even, at one point, pushed for a carbon tax on oil to reduce emissions.

In May, when the parties to the climate talks reconvene, they should consider three interactive strategies:

§ *Subsidy switches.* The United States currently spends around $20 billion a year in direct subsidies of fossil fuels. If that money were put into renewable technologies (as well as into retraining displaced coal miners) it would provide incentives for the big oil companies to aggressively develop and market fuel cells, wind farms and solar systems.

§ *A progressive fossil fuel efficiency standard.* The parties should scrap international "emissions trading" and instead adopt a standard under which every country would begin at its current baseline to improve its fossil fuel efficiency by a specified amount every year until the 70 percent reduction is attained. By drawing progressively more of their energy from noncarbon sources, countries would create mass markets that would make these sources as cheap as coal and oil.

§ *Creation of a large technology-transfer fund.* The nations of the world should consider a tax on international currency transactions to fund the transfer of clean energy to developing countries. A tax of a quarter-penny per dollar on those transactions—which total $1.5 trillion per day—would help stabilize capital flows as well as net about $300 billion a year for wind farms in India, fuel-cell factories in South Africa and solar assemblies in El Salvador.

These measures would be far easier to negotiate, monitor and enforce. More important, they would represent a scale of response appropriate to the magnitude of the climate crisis that threatens the continuity of our organized civilization. ROSS GELBSPAN

Ross Gelbspan, author of The Heat Is On *(Perseus), maintains the website www.heatisonline.org.*

DUDE, WHERE'S MY KLAWANS?

Commenting on the German film *Run Lola Run* two years ago, *The Nation*'s redoubtable film critic, Stuart Klawans, quoted a character speaking nominally of soccer: "The ball is round. The game lasts ninety minutes." He went on to write, "That's a good answer, if your head's filled with the same stuff as the ball.... Just don't forget which part of you is getting booted." Vintage Klawans, who gibed his fellow critics as well for decrying "the demise of movie culture—laments that have been sighed, paradoxically, over the living bodies of any number of vital but less fashionable films." Holiday moviegoers have doubtless missed Stuart's insight, grace and humor in recent weeks; we here report that after a dozen years spent in the dark so that the rest of us might see some light, he has decided to take a sabbatical. We'll miss his presence. In the interim, we hope you'll find the occasional film commentary by others in these pages to be very much in his spirit.

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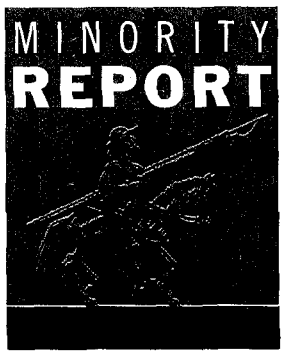
CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Powell's Secret Coup



The coronation of Colin Powell will probably not be interrupted by any of the specific questions about his mediocre and sometimes sinister past that were so well phrased by David Corn ["Questions for Powell," January 8/15]. The political correctness of the nomination, in both its "rainbow" and "bipartisan" aspects, will see to that. Powell has often defined himself as "a fiscal conservative and a social liberal," which also happens to be the core identity of the Washington press corps. Set against this, what is the odd war crime, or cover-up of same, or deception of a gullible Congress? Time to move on.

To move on, to be exact, to the militarization of the State Department and the triumph of the military over civilian control. The most important moment in Powell's career as a Republican came in the first months of the first Clinton Administration, when he organized and led a political mutiny against the Commander in Chief and saw the mutiny succeed. It's "legacy" time, so everybody feels entitled to be stupidly lenient, but no consideration of Clinton as a President is complete until we take the full measure of his surrender on this critical point.

He was elected, you may remember, having promised to lift the ban on homosexuals serving in the military and having promised to lift the embargo on the supply of arms to Bosnia. Nor were these mere "fine print" promises: The first had been front and center in his fundraising and campaigning, and the second had involved comparisons with the Final Solution, of the sort that can't easily be taken back. Within a few months of his swearing the oath that he was to break in so many ways, Clinton receded from both these pledges. In both instances, he caved in to a political revolt orchestrated by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Could I put you to the trouble of rereading that brief last sentence? The first cold war presidency began with Harry Truman putting the military in its constitutional place on matters foreign and domestic, firing Gen. Douglas MacArthur for trying to run a private war in Korea and telling the armed forces to desegregate and to do it right away. The first post–cold war presidency began with an abject surrender to the brass, on the treatment of an unpopular minority and on an important foreign policy question. The comparison is even more appalling when you remember that Truman did not base his two best decisions on election pledges.

Colin Powell would not have been able to enjoy his long career as a butt-kisser and timeserver had Truman not told the Joint Chiefs to obey orders and desegregate. However, weeks after Clinton was elected and eight days before he was inaugurated, Powell appeared before the Naval Academy and enjoined his audience to consider resigning if they opposed an end to the ban on gays in the military. Not long before that, he had written and signed an Op-Ed in the *New York Times* flatly opposing military intervention in the Balkans (at least on the Bosnian side; the existing arms embargo already favored Milosevic and Tudjman).

Clinton, of course, could not buckle fast enough. He allowed himself—and his pathetic Defense Secretary, Les Aspin—to be humiliated in public on visits to United States warships [see "Minority Report," April 12, 1993]. He left the Bosnians at the mercy of Milosevic for two crucial years. He allowed the USS Harlan County to be scared away from Haiti by a handful of CIA-financed goons. And he came up with the contemptible policy of "don't ask, don't tell," where the police questioning and invigilation and intimidation still went on—even increased—and where volunteer servicemen and -women were told their only hope lay in lying.

Not even this was enough to satisfy Powell. On the day of his retirement as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he was humbly asked by Clinton what he thought of Aspin, and Powell replied that the poor sap had forfeited the confidence of the armed forces. The President, Powell calmly said, might want to consider replacing him. No sooner suggested than done. This would qualify as gross insubordination in any self-respecting democracy (Powell should not have been asked; neither should he have told), but remember who the President was. It was a little afterward that Clinton decided to ignore all reports of what was impending in Rwanda and to employ the US veto at the UN to forestall any pre-emptive action. This, too, was done to gratify the reactionary and military noninterventionists. (The disgrace was compounded by Clinton's diplomatic support for the later French intervention, on the side of their client Rwandan murderers.)

Now we enter upon a moment when a gigantic decision has to be made about the building of a suicidally dangerous and stupid "National Missile Defense" system. And the State Department, which has the job of overseeing the numerous arms-control treaties to which the United States is a signatory, has been annexed by a former professional military man with a long record of shady politicization of the armed forces and their role. The selling of Star Wars will be a great deal easier with such a man at Foggy Bottom and with the press and Congress already predisposed to eat out of his "inclusive" palm and lick his highly polished "inclusive" boots. This is actually the continuation of Clintonism by other means, a banana republic garnished with identity politics. (If Toni Morrison and Arthur Miller could be induced to fawn and coo about "our first black President," what can they say about our first black Caesar?)

This is the last column of mine that will appear in the Clinton era. Eight years ago, I concluded that the man was a pathological liar, filthy about women, corrupt about money, desperate to please authority, a serf alike to powerful interests and to opinion polls. His legacy is "managed competition," "don't ask, don't tell" and "faith-based" care for the losers. He didn't mean it about the era of big government being "over," as Powell and others are about to demonstrate, using his same selective principles. It's been a nasty interlude between the Bushes. The incurables among you can now set to work, to make Bush seem a dismal interlude between two wonderful Clintons. ■

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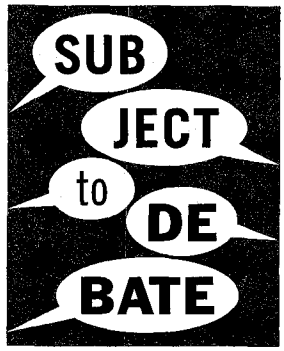
KATHA POLLITT

Happy New Year



A cold snowy start to the new year, the first day of the new millennium. Not the fun one with champagne at the Pyramids and the all-night, round-the-globe pseudoprofundities and the secret letdown when our computers didn't turn into pumpkins at midnight. I mean the real millennium, with the bad news bears basking on their ice floes as the stock market sinks and thousands tremble as The Anxious Consumer ponders whether to spring for the new Chevrolet Astro or live with the old Dodge Caravan a bit longer. On the radio a mom explained that her kids just wanted gift certificates for Christmas so they could take advantage of the post-holiday sales. How old are these kids? 50? This morning, same station, a man from the Cato Institute instructs us to count our blessings: We are all a lot better off than a hundred years ago; after all, Americans are two inches taller now.

On New Year's Day, a stern young black man missing his front teeth preaches on the subway: "Mr. Black Man! Mr. White Man! What is the meaning of Eternity? Repent! Repent!" He stalks the aisle, dressed all in black and carrying a blood-red Bible, like a mad priest in an opera, while passengers stare stonily into the headlines: I'M SACKING SATAN, declares ex-Jet Marc Gastineau in the *New York Post*, once again evading jail for beating his wife, who like him has gone into Christian therapy ("'I contributed to a lot of the violence,' said the slight, 5-foot-5 woman"). In the passageway between stations, a tiny man of unguessable age wearing a filthy Ralph Lauren American Flag sweater plays a violin as if it were an unfamiliar object he had found in the trash; a young black man sings Beatles songs expertly and with unflagging good cheer. The Christmas-caroling street minister with the fantastic baritone voice is gone, but the Chinese musician is still seated on the L train platform, bending in total concentration over his *pipa*, an elegant longnecked stringed instrument that emits at the touch of his bow a thin wail, like a dying cat.

My father turns 81 in his hospital bed. After three brain surgeries, who knows what he understands? Flowers arrive that he does not look at; cards are read that he does not listen to. Friends arrive with "get well" offerings—a sleep mask, earplugs, pictures of their children—and leave quickly, stricken. Newly arrived from England, a Kazakh friend complains, "They won't move him to the other bed, although I keep asking!" It seems *that* bed is the lucky one, the one where the patients get better. A staggering amount of medical help and equipment swirls around my father; it is as though experts have been summoned from all over the world—a doctor from Korea, nurses from the Philippines and Ireland, aides from Jamaica and Guyana and India and Central America—all for the express purpose of tending a few limp, pale Americans. And yet the simplest realities—that my father has eaten essentially nothing for almost two weeks—seem to evoke no sense of urgency, to fall into the spaces between specialists and between changing shifts.

In *Man's Fate*, the Russian Communist Katov prepares himself to be thrown alive into a furnace after the Shanghai rebellion he helped organize is betrayed by Stalin. He says to himself, "Let's suppose I died in a fire." What style, I thought as a teenager, what cool. Today I think: Well, it would be scary and painful, but at least it would be quick. And by dying in 1927, Katov got to keep his political dignity: He didn't have to persuade himself that voting for a protest candidate was a radical act or inveigh against "global capitalism," or "corporate capitalism," as if there were some other kind—national capitalism? mom-and-pop capitalism?—that could be brought out of the closet of history, and donned like a comfy old suit.

I had planned a very different column—upbeat and energetic, with exhortations to *do more* and a list of clever resolutions. I e-mailed my whole address book asking for suggestions for feminist activism. I don't know what I was hoping for—seize the TV stations? Dangle John Ashcroft off a skyscraper till he promises to spend the rest of his life cleaning abortion clinic toilets? Raise a lesbian militia to fight the Taliban? What came in was nothing like that. Write letters, the activists said, make phone calls, raise money, bother your politicians, volunteer. Challenge the sexism of daily life, the writers wrote: racist and sexist remarks, panels with no women, all-male magazine forums and debates. Link issue A with issue B, the academics urged.

Fine, but according to *Newsweek*, there are now 1 million slaves in America, mostly women and girls—cleaning houses, making clothes, servicing men sexually to pay off traffickers and pimps. Ask yourself what kind of man would fuck a slave, some Chinese or Albanian or Thai teenager in a plywood cubicle with a mattress on the floor. Do you think he cares if you write a letter to your congressman? Maybe he *is* your congressman.

The world spins only forward, says Prior Walter in *Angels in America*. But which way is that? Most members of my study group think intellectuals and activists have no special role to play in history. They only perch atop its shifting tectonic plates, ready to jump on the backs of the workers at the first sign of autonomous action. "The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing," quotes the Last Marxist at least once per meeting, which goes on all day and ends with a wonderful meal. Last time, we invited the Race Traitors—Noel Ignatiev, John Garvey, Beth Henson—and accused them of daring to think they could spark a movement with a magazine and a book. Wow, said Noel, you guys are really depressed. Yes, I said, usually it takes us all day to feel this irrelevant, and it isn't even lunchtime yet.

I go home in the snow, I e-mail the President to save the Alaskan wilderness, proving yet again that I have no dignity and do not read my own columns. At bedtime we read aloud from *Mona in the Promised Land*, by my daughter's favorite contemporary American writer, Gish Jen.

"If there's a depression, will we have enough money?" Sophie asks as we turn out the light. "Don't worry about it," I say. "Everything will be fine. We can always sing in the subway." ■

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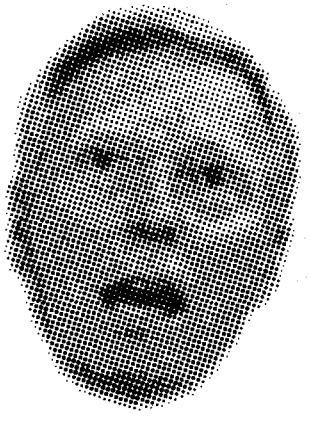
ARTICLES

TAG TEAM "D"



DICK "Eliminator" GEPHARDT

BUSH'S PHONY 'BIPARTISANSHIP'

★

by JOHN NICHOLS

TAG TEAM "R"

TOM "Crusher" DeLAY

When it finally became clear that George W. Bush would be the 43rd President of the United States, a worried US Representative Bernie Sanders asked the Congressional Research Service for a list of all the legislation that outgoing President Bill Clinton had vetoed in his second term. Sanders theorized that the list, which ran from a sweeping cut in estate taxes to legislation banning late-term abortions, would form the basis of the new President's legislative agenda in 2001.

"It's logical; these are bills that passed the last Congress with solid majorities of Republicans and conservative Democrats, and that were only stopped with a veto," says Sanders, an independent who caucuses with the Democrats but does not cloak his frustration with the party's failure to champion a progressive agenda. "If the Republicans are smart, they'll start moving a lot of these bills through quickly, get Bush to sign them and spin the story that the new President has broken the gridlock."

Even as many Bush critics continue to focus on reviewing county-by-county returns from Florida, Sanders is moving fast in hopes of thwarting the GOP plan. "By knowing the issues that the Bush people are likely to move on, by getting the word out, I'm hoping that we can rally grassroots opposition—turn some of the anger at how Bush got elected into issue-based activism," he says. Without such pressure, Sanders fears, the Republicans "will pass a lot of legislation, and they will begin to construct the fantasy that Bush, against all expectations, is a successful President."

The biggest concern of Sanders and other progressives is that the fantasy will be aided, not hindered, by Democrats who think they can play nice with Bush early on and then channel fury over the 2000 election into a Congressional sweep in 2002 and a reclaiming of the White House in 2004. "Either we break up this congenial, very nice, big-smile lie of bipartisanship or we will see our message corrupted by the suggestion that Democrats and Republicans really aren't all that different," says Democratic Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. "If that happens, we will make it look like Ralph Nader was right when he said there were no differences between the parties, and we will lose any advantage coming out of the 2000 election."

It is not difficult to imagine how House and Senate Democrats might hand Bush the tools he needs. The Bush-as-uniter spin is already being sold—tune in to most mainstream political punditry and you'll hear the theory that the 107th Congress will spend two years straddling the political fifty-yard line as power rests in the hands of "moderate" blueblood Republicans like Senator Lincoln Chafee and Representative Amo Houghton, along with conservative Blue Dog Democrats like Representative Charles Stenholm and Senator John Breaux. To hear the pundits tell it, Stenholm, Breaux and their Blue Dog and slightly more moderate New Dog colleagues are the new kings of the hill—compromise-prone Democrats whom their own party leaders cannot afford to lose and whom the Bush Administration will not be able to ignore. With Congress more closely divided than at any point in recent

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American history—the GOP controls the House by only ten seats and the Senate is evenly divided, with Vice President Dick Cheney the tiebreaking vote—and with a President "swept" into office by a disputed 5-to-4 Supreme Court decision, the theory goes that legislation passing this Congress will have to be vetted by a coterie of centrist Democrats and Republicans.

Even for some progressives, that's an appealing prospect. Better a Bush tied to the center than the right wing untethered, according to this view. After all, while Bush's contested selection may have made him a weakened President, he arrives in Washington with an advantage no Republican President has enjoyed since Eisenhower in 1953: a Republican-controlled House and an effectively Republican Senate. With the party's Taliban wing counseling a "go for it" strategy, this trifecta could pay out for the GOP social and economic agenda [see Robert Dreyfuss, page 16].

Realistically, however, Bush and his aides know they lack a mandate for an elbows-flying charge—hence the appeal to "bipartisanship." Their model is Ronald Reagan, who arrived in Washington in 1981 with a bold agenda and a Republican Senate but a distinct GOP deficit in the House. Reagan's team quickly identified thirty to forty "Boll Weevil" Democrats—Southern conservatives who for reasons of region or personal history had not made a party switch—and a handful of Northern white ethnic "Reagan Democrats." So ardently did the Reaganites pursue the renegade Democrats that some veteran Republicans complained they could get better treatment by switching parties. But no one questioned the necessity of the Reagan strategy, and it paid off handsomely with the passage of key components of the new President's trickle-down economic agenda and Cold Warrior foreign policy.

Bush's model is Reagan, whose team identified and wooed thirty to forty Democrats who provided the winning margin for his agenda.

It will be harder for Bush than it was for Reagan, who won the 1980 election with a clear majority. But those who imagine Bush as a bumbling incompetent would be wise to recall his able forays into "bipartisanship" as governor of Texas. And they would be wiser still to ponder the politics of the Blue Dog Southern Democrats and at least some of the Democratic Leadership Council–linked New Dogs—who are ideologically and politically inclined to become the Boll Weevils of the new Congress. "The Democrats that George W. Bush is preparing to work with in a 'bipartisan' fashion would, objectively, be Republicans if they lived north of the Mason-Dixon line," says Jackson. "So there is no bipartisanship here; there is no reaching out to people who have honest differences and forging unexpected coalitions. There is just conservatives getting together. But, I tell you, if we allow the press to suggest that this is a bipartisan coalition, we will play into the hands of Bush, the Republicans and the Greens, who say there is no hope for the Democratic Party."

That's exactly what GOP strategists are counting on. Already, William F. Buckley's *National Review* is promoting what it calls "conservative bipartisanship" along Reagan/Boll Weevil lines. And while Democrats chuckle over the damage done to Bush's presidency by the Florida fiasco, *National Review* tells its audience—correctly—that "close elections, even those tainted by allegations of illegitimacy, need not spell doom for the winner. John F. Kennedy became president by a slim popular-vote margin, but his administration reassured a nervous public. The Democrats had a very good election in 1962, losing only four seats in the House and gaining three in the Senate, and won a landslide in 1964."

Faced with the prospect of another "weakened presidency" turning out to be stronger than anyone expected, the question is: Who will fight the Bush agenda? Senate minority leader Tom Daschle will have his hands full with a caucus that includes Bush's buddy Breaux and several other right-leaning Southerners. Indeed, it appears that Bush's biggest Senate "crisis" may be the determination of Republican John McCain, Bush's primary opponent, and Democrat Russ Feingold to attach their campaign finance reform bill to key pieces of legislation. Republicans are furious at McCain for his genuine acts of bipartisanship—both on the campaign finance issue and with his tacit endorsement of Daschle's appeals for power-sharing in the Senate. Yet McCain continues to reject urging from Lott and others to smooth the way for Bush.

The first real test for Senate Democrats will involve their handling of Bush's appointments; GOP senators in 1993 showed with their aggressive, issue-oriented questioning of Clinton's Cabinet picks that the approval process is ripe with opportunities for embarrassing a new administration. There will definitely be a fight over Bush's selection of archconservative John Ashcroft as Attorney General, but Bush has made equally troubling appointments at second-tier positions—like that of Ann Veneman as Agriculture Secretary and Spencer Abraham as Energy Secretary. Watch for Democratic Senators Paul Wellstone and Tom Harkin to use key committee perches to open the debate about the Bush Administration's direction. But don't expect many Bush picks to be rejected or even held up for long.

In the House, where the partisan divide runs deeper, minority leader Dick Gephardt knows the importance of developing a coherent plan of attack. Yet he is hamstrung by threats from potential party-switchers and the natural inclination of many DLC members to sympathize with Bush policies on education, health reform and military spending. Additionally, Gephardt and other Democratic leaders worry about pushing so hard they're labeled as "too partisan" Democratic versions of House GOP whip Tom DeLay and his minions. Gephardt must also devote energy to redistricting fights that, if they go awry, could cost Democrats a dozen or more seats. This year, state legislatures and governors will be using the 2000 census to draw district lines for the next Congress, a process that could have as much impact on partisan divisions in the next House as anything Bush does. On top of all these other demands, Al Gore's fallen star has turned at least some of Gephardt's attention to the prospect of mounting a presidential run in 2004.

Well aware of these facts, progressive Democrats are not waiting for the generals to sound the charge. "Florida is over. That fight is done. We can and we should continue the struggle for voting reforms that expand our democracy, but we have to

John Nichols writes "The Beat" for The Nation. *Research support provided by the Elections 2000 Fund of the Nation Institute.*

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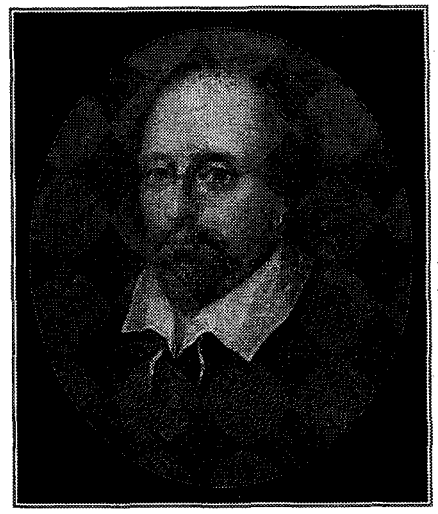

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recognize that this is just one of the issues we have to focus on in what is going to be a very dangerous period of great struggle," argues Jackson. He'll work with both the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus—where fury at the way in which Bush was elected bubbled over in late December with threats by veteran members to boycott the Bush inaugural. Jackson can muster equal fury, and he'll be at January demonstrations led by his father, the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr., and NAACP president Kweisi Mfume, but he says the primary focus must be on the legislative battles that could begin even before Bush is sworn in. "I share the frustration over what happened in Florida, but I'm telling you that we simply cannot let ourselves get sidetracked," he says. "We need to stay off George W. Bush's message. We need to offer an alternative on every issue."

One area where the alternative may become clear quickly is in the fight over whether the Florida debacle will lead to genuine electoral reform. Republican Senator Mitch McConnell has moved to head off serious review of the Florida election mess by

George Bush's Democrats

Following Vice President Al Gore's concession, President-elect Bush announced: "I was not elected to serve one party, but to serve one nation. The President of the United States is the President of every single American, of every race and every background." It was an appropriate speech delivered from the Democratic-controlled Texas House chambers. Referring to the Texas House as "a home to bipartisan cooperation," Bush added, "Republicans and Democrats have worked together to do what is right for the people we represent."

But who are George Bush's bipartisan Democrats?

Texas State Representative Paul Sadler, a Democrat, told the *New York Times* that Bush "didn't invent bipartisanship in Texas." It "kind of developed over the years because of the nature of the system." Nature of the system? What system? Essentially it is the same "system" around which the rest of the Southern Democratic Party developed.

The Southern Democratic Party was the party of slavery. Conservative Democrats were the Confederates during the Civil War. Democrats either were, or cooperated with, the KKK in resisting Reconstruction. Following *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), conservative Democrats practiced Jim Crow—separate and unequal. And after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), conservative Southern Democrats were the prime resisters of desegregation.

After *Brown* and the civil rights evolution of the 1960s, and the application of Goldwater's 1964 and Nixon's 1968 "Southern strategy," Southern white males especially began to leave the national Democratic Party in significant numbers. Republicans began to appeal to them with a series of racial themes and code words: "conservatism" during the civil rights struggles in 1964, "law and order" after the riots of 1967–68, "antibusing" in 1972, "welfare queen" in 1980, "Willie Horton" in 1988 and "compassionate conservatism" in 2000. Democrats also played this game: Carter's "ethnic purity" misstep in 1976 almost got him into serious trouble with the party's base; Bill Clinton used "Sister Souljah," and Al Gore emphasized crime ("blanket America in blue")—Democratic Southerners all. And all, Republicans and Democrats alike, are from the same system. Clinton redefined the Democratic Party away from the "special interests" of blacks—symbolized by Jesse L. Jackson Sr.—by politically manipulating a rapper. Because of Jackson's tireless pursuit of racial justice, and because he's a strong and highly visible Democrat, Republicans are now attempting to define and identify him as the symbol of the Democratic Party.

Taking a page from ultraconservative Ronald Reagan—who often referred favorably to the liberal FDR—Bush quoted the ideological founder of the Democratic Party, Thomas Jefferson. But Jefferson, a Virginian, was also the author of a Kentucky resolution and conservative theory of Southern resistance called "nullification," and his Democratic partner, James Madison, developed the theory of "interposition." Both concepts were forms of Southern resistance—first, resistance to ending slavery, and later to ending Jim Crow segregation. Jefferson also provided the ideological foundation for the concept of "local control"—the stepchild of "states' rights." Bull Connor, Jim Clark, Lester Maddox, Orval Faubus and George Wallace were all the products of this "system" and were Democratic advocates of states' rights, local control and an antifederal ideology of less government, lower taxes and a strong military.

It is this legacy of conservative Southern Democrats that created the "bipartisan system" that State Representative Paul Sadler referred to. It is this legacy of conservative Southern Democrats in Congress with which President-elect Bush intends to work. But the President-elect's problem of governing all of the people cannot be satisfied merely by building bridges to essentially conservative Southern Blue Dog, Yellow Dog, New Dog or DLC Dog Democrats. These conservative dogs already support him. His problem will be in reaching out and building bridges to liberals and progressives who feel like they've been treated like dogs, who represent the dogs who have been left out in the cold and put in the doghouse by a bipartisan coalition of conservative Republicans and Democrats. Indeed, this is the bipartisan pack that consistently bites us.

This conservative bipartisan coalition is generally for denying a woman's right to choose, supports charitable choice and violates the Constitution's mandate of church and state separation by attempting to put parochial prayers and the Ten Commandments in public schools. Out of this bipartisan "system" comes the privatization movement—public vouchers for private schools, privatizing all or part of Social Security, privatizing healthcare through medical savings accounts and much more.

It is this conservative bipartisan coalition that allows Ralph Nader to say that we have one corporate party with two different names. If Democrats go down this bipartisan path it will only strengthen Nader and the Greens for 2002 and 2004. The move down that path has already been aided by Democrats: In 1992 a conservative Democrat, Bill Clinton, selected an even more conservative running mate, Al Gore, who in 2000 selected an even more conservative running mate, Joseph Lieberman. By helping to shift the Democratic Party and the country further right, a very conservative George W. Bush could select an ultraconservative Dick Cheney as his running mate—and win.

The heart and soul of this conservative bipartisan coalition is the

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proposing hearings on what went wrong in 2000 and by offering tepid reforms. Democratic Senator Charles Schumer, in contrast, is seeking to require the Federal Election Commission to produce a plan for avoiding future Floridas; he wants to allocate $250 million to help state and local election officials improve voting procedures. Democratic Representative Peter DeFazio, outgoing chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, is advancing a bill to establish a federal election-review commission. And members of the Congressional Black Caucus can be expected to push for review of policies that depress participation by African-Americans and other minority groups.

But the real fights are likely to be over economic issues—particularly taxation. Progressives say they see genuine opportunities to identify differences between the aspirations of conservatives and those of the great mass of Americans. "Progressive populist politics is a majority politics, and we cannot forget that, especially on these tax issues," says Wellstone. "Most Americans don't think billionaires should get a tax cut." Sanders wants progressives—and, ideally, the Democratic caucus—to offer an alternative budget proposal. "We need to say what could be done with those billions to provide young people with college education, to provide children with basic healthcare, to create a safety net for family farmers in a rapidly altering global marketplace," he says.

Battles over economic issues, particularly on trade and globalization, could actually be easier for progressives to wage against a GOP administration than against the Clinton White House. During the brief postelection session of the 106th Congress, Democratic Representative Sherrod Brown said he was already witnessing an upside to opposition. "I was talking to this Democratic Congressman who had voted for most of the corporate free-trade agreements—NAFTA, GATT, PNTR for China—and he said, 'Look, I just couldn't vote against these deals when Clinton was pushing them. But now that Bush is in, there's no way I'm voting for them anymore,'" said Brown. "It was hard for a lot of Congressional Democrats to follow their natural populist inclinations when there was a corporatist Democrat in the White House. Now, a lot of the Democrats who were listening to Clinton can start to listen to their constituencies and to their consciences."

Wellstone agrees with the notion that Democrats unbound may be better positioned to fight on a host of economic issues. "The President and his Administration defined a lot of what the Democratic Party stood for," says Wellstone. "In the past, when we had a Democratic President who did not define the party message to involve these global economic issues, and to involve a progressive approach to economics in general, it was very hard to break through. That will not be the case now."

Jon Corzine, a millionaire whose free-spending run for a New Jersey Senate seat turned off many campaign-finance-reform enthusiasts, impressed Wellstone by going out of his way to ask how progressives would be working together in the new Senate. Wellstone says he expects to see Corzine and as many as ten other Democratic senators at informal meetings of progressives who will seek to advance causes like union-backed healthcare reform that would permit states to experiment with various approaches to guaranteeing coverage for all.

In the House there is broad acknowledgment that the fifty-three-member Progressive Caucus must be radically remade to be a force in the new Congress and beyond. To that end, Sanders, along with Democrats Maurice Hinchey, Tammy Baldwin, Barbara Lee, Cynthia McKinney, John Conyers and other key members, met after the election to map a strategy that is expected to include development of a political action committee designed to elect left-leaning candidates. Working with the Institute for Policy Studies, the caucus plans a January "Festival of Ideas" on Capitol Hill to address policy and strategy on the eve of the inauguration.

Key to the caucus's prospects of playing a more dynamic role

South, though by no means do all white Southerners regard themselves as part of it. Most Southern Democratic elected officials would be Republicans above the Mason-Dixon line, and Republican Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine, for example, could not be elected south of the Mason-Dixon line in either party. She would be seen as too liberal, and her views would be considered traitorous to Southern heritage, traditions and values.

More than half of all African-Americans still live in the former Confederacy, and nationally they voted 92 percent for Gore. Yet the entire body of Democratic leadership in the House and Senate are all white men. While Bush got only 8 percent of the African-American vote, Democrats have no visible elected African-American Congressional leaders who compare to the Republican exceptions of Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice or Representative J.C. Watts of Oklahoma.

This system is what President Lyndon Johnson understood on August 6, 1965, when he signed the Voting Rights Act and afterward said privately that national Democrats had probably lost the South for at least a quarter-century. He understood the system that produced Southern politics and the bipartisan white coalition that drove it. His insight has now come home to roost big-time in the 2000 election. Bush won the old Confederacy and the rural states of the West, which have a similar political philosophy—plus Indiana, Ohio and New Hampshire. Gore won the old Union states of the North and Northeast, plus New Mexico, California, Oregon and Washington, which are more in harmony with national Democratic policies.

This system of bipartisan cooperation, social and economic conservatism, and individualistic, personalistic and pietistic religion is rooted in a region that imposes the highest number of death penalties and has the highest crime in the country, the poorest schools, the worst healthcare and housing, the greatest environmental degradation and the greatest poverty—and this conservative Southern system sustains it and is increasingly leading and influencing the nation. As State Representative Garnet Coleman, a Houston Democrat, said, "Even if something is bipartisan, it still often doesn't solve the problems of certain groups of people in Texas. They would be people who don't have health insurance, working families, the vulnerable in our society."

The South, and America, need a progressive bipartisan economic coalition to fight for better jobs and job training, healthcare, affordable housing and a good educational system—for all Americans. However, that is not the agenda of Bush and his Democrats.

JESSE L. JACKSON JR.

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson Jr. represents Illinois's 2nd District. He and Frank E. Watkins are co-authors of A More Perfect Union *(Welcome Rain), to be published in mid-2001.*

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will be Representative Dennis Kucinich, who in December was elected caucus chairman. "I think progressives can offer the Democratic leadership something that is needed: a real vision for where this country should be headed, not some compromise that leaves everyone disappointed," says Kucinich. "With our energy, we can move beyond this whole idea of simply beating up on Bush—which I don't believe will be effective—and put forward an energetic program that asks why this Congress can't enact a real HMO Bill of Rights for all Americans, why this Congress can't expand protections for the environment, why this Congress can't enact labeling for genetically modified foods."

Representative Jan Schakowsky argues for a strategy of "planting the flag where Republicans can't go." This includes a passionate defense of reproductive rights, advocacy for pay equity and civil rights measures, and a new focus on the importance of defending the separation of church and state. Frustrated by the success the GOP had in blurring the margins of debate over such issues as Medicare prescription-drug benefits and an HMO Bill of Rights, she says, "As progressives, we need to be truth-tellers—the people who really clarify issues. In this last campaign, we saw issues that Democrats should have owned get lost to the Republicans." (One example: By offering their own watered-down proposal for prescription-drug reform and then savaging the Democratic plan as "big government," Republicans turned a 70–30 polling deficit on the issue into a 50–50 split that did them little harm on Election Day.) By staking out a clear agenda, says Schakowsky, progressives can place the Democratic Party on firmer ground in Congress and at the grassroots. "As a lifelong organizer, I see real opportunities here for progressives," she says. "There is a passion out there. People are furious with the way the 2000 election ended. They are looking for a political home, and progressives are best positioned to offer them that home."

Schakowsky and a number of other newer members see aggressive organizing outside Congress as vital to battling Bush's agenda and making the Democratic Party an attractive alternative in 2002 and 2004. "If conservative Democrats begin working with Bush, as I believe they will, the Republican Party, Bush and his people will claim they have built a bipartisan coalition that represents the great American majority," says Jackson, who wants to see far stronger linkages between the Progressive Caucus and African-American, labor, student and women's groups. "The only way we can counter that is by reaching out to the tens of millions of Americans who think of themselves as progressives—be they Democrats or Greens—and to the tens of millions of Americans who don't even vote at this point. They have to be our answer to the lie of bipartisanship; they have to say, 'George W. Bush and some conservative Democrats may have agreed on this tax cut for billionaires or that new restriction on a woman's right to choose, but we the people did not agree.'"

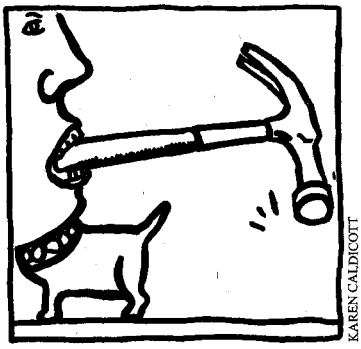
Jackson says lack of organization is a longstanding weakness of liberals. "Now, in the face of the almost certain abandonment of our struggle by conservative Democrats, we will either organize ourselves in the Congress and at the grassroots or we will fail," he says. "The right wing is extremely well organized. We will either equal that organization or we will be defeated in this session of Congress, in 2002 and beyond." ■

HOUSE GOP WHIP TOM DeLAY WILL DO HIS BEST TO PULL THE PRESIDENT TO THE RIGHT.

Bush's Hammer

ROBERT DREYFUSS

The distinctly uncompassionate partner to compassionate conservative George W. Bush in 2001 will be House majority whip Tom DeLay, the Texas firebrand who is arguably the most powerful man in Congress. A gleeful hard-right partisan, nicknamed "the Hammer" for his willingness to use brute political power and for his often heavy-handed manner, DeLay is the man Democrats love to hate. During the Battle of Florida, DeLay called Vice President Gore's recount effort "nothing less than a theft in progress" and organized a phalanx of Republican aides from Capitol Hill who, neatly groomed and white-shirted, staged the ersatz riot outside the doors of the Miami-Dade canvassing board that may or may not have convinced the board's hapless officials to shut down the recount there. And, amid the bipartisan song of love currently wafting through the nation's capital, DeLay has consistently emitted off-key notes of combative rancor.


KAREN CALDICOTT

"We are at exactly what I've worked for in my twenty-two years of elected office. We are the majority party in this country. There is no tied election," DeLay told the Capitol Hill newspaper *Roll Call* in early December, fired up by the fact that Republicans control the White House and both houses of Congress. "This is one incredible opportunity. I don't really understand some Republicans running around depressed. This is the greatest opportunity we've had in our lives. And I can't wait."

DeLay is fiercely ideological and closely tied to the Republican right, including Christian conservatives, flat-taxers, the National Rifle Association, free-enterprise libertarians and rural property-rights activists out West. Addressing the Christian Coalition's Road to Victory 2000 conference last September, DeLay thundered against what he called "a cultural coup d'état, a revolution launched by a privileged few who are determined to discredit

Robert Dreyfuss is an independent journalist based in Alexandria, Virginia. Research support provided by the Elections 2000 Fund of the Nation Institute.

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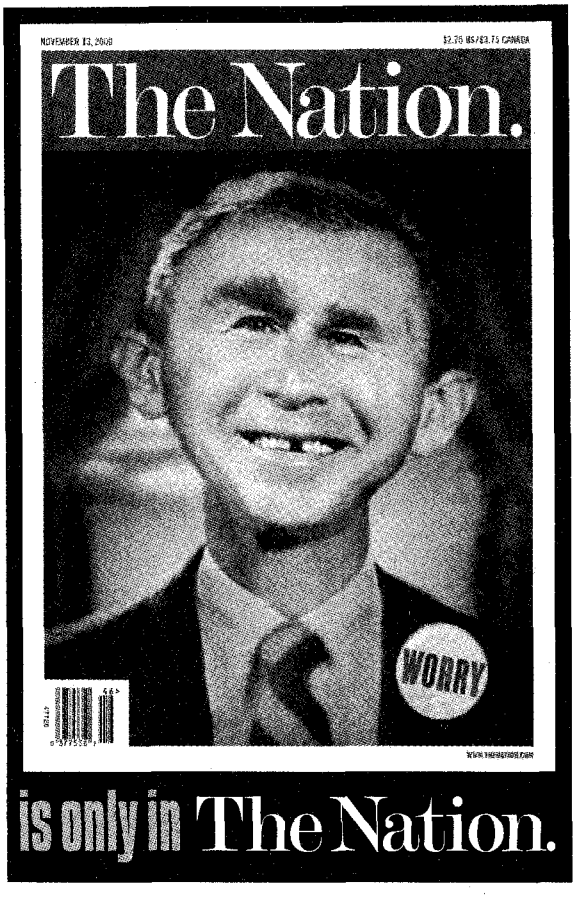

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and, ultimately, replace core American traditions." In the last session of Congress, he co-sponsored bills to abolish the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Energy, make English America's official language, establish right-to-work laws nationally, gut the Endangered Species Act, remove all limits on campaign contributions and enact a host of antilabor and antiabortion standards. "He is among the twenty most conservative members of Congress," says Ralph Neas, president of People for the American Way.

Democrats in Congress, who've battled DeLay for the past six years, portray him as an uncompromising advocate for the conservative fringe. "Over the last two years, Tom DeLay has sabotaged a whole series of bipartisan agreements on bills, burying them in committees or stopping them in [House-Senate] conference," says an aide to minority leader Dick Gephardt. "They've been very creative about it." What's unknown, the aide said, is whether George W. Bush will allow DeLay to pull him to the right. "That's the big question. There is no indication that DeLay will consider moderating his views."

DeLay is a savvy player with a masterful ability to get things done. A major part of his power is his ability to mobilize campaign cash.

But DeLay is no cardboard-cutout right-wing fanatic. Despite his rhetorical flamboyance, he is a savvy and pragmatic behind-the-scenes player with a masterful ability to count votes, build coalitions and get things done. He controls the single most powerful political machine in Washington, running the Republican caucus in the House like a private fiefdom and maintaining unparalleled ties to the class of Washington lobbyists, political action committees, law firms and money men (collectively known as "K Street"). If President Bush and the Republicans succeed in advancing a conservative agenda in 2001, Tom DeLay will be the reason why—and, all the while, DeLay will be tugging the centrist-leaning Bush steadily rightward.

"While he's known for his ideological fervor, he can also be a steely-eyed pragmatist," says Marshall Wittman, a conservative activist at the Hudson Institute in Washington. While he will quietly press the hard-right cause, he may also be useful to Bush in keeping the right on the reservation, says Wittman. "Because of his credibility, he can also deliver the bad news to the right. He can say, 'Here's what we can get for you. It's only half a loaf.'"

Fundamentally, DeLay is about making Congress work. "He is the implementer," says Robert Rusbuldt, a senior lobbyist for the Independent Insurance Agents of America and a key member of DeLay's Kitchen Cabinet. "Some think he is the enforcer." DeLay himself seems to relish his behind-the-scenes role, once referring to former Speaker Newt Gingrich as the GOP's "visionary" and to House majority leader Dick Armey, a fellow Texan, as the "policy wonk," before saying of himself: "I'm the ditch digger who makes it all happen."

That ability comes from his mastery of the House through the whip organization—widely recognized as the most powerful and efficient in decades, perhaps ever—cemented by his ability to raise huge sums of money for himself, other members of Congress and the Republican Party, and his partnership with Washington's lobbying establishment.

As majority whip, it's DeLay's job to maintain an hour-by-hour sense of where Republicans are on issues that are headed to the House floor, enforcing party discipline, rounding up votes on hotly contested bills and wheeling, dealing and trading favors to win over strays. He controls the 221-strong GOP caucus through a network of fifteen senior Republicans in the whip organization, aided by his deputy, Representative Roy Blunt of Missouri, who for the past year has also served as Bush's liaison to Congress. The assistant whips, in turn, manage more than sixty other members, organized on a regional basis. "He's the Energizer Whip," says Bill Paxon, a close DeLay ally who retired from Congress in 1999. "His whip organization has hundreds of lines of communication to groups downtown and around the country. If you go to a whip meeting, as soon as DeLay asks for help, people in those meetings start raising their hands and phones start ringing." Most of those phones ring in the offices of K Street lobbyists, like Paxon's current one at the powerhouse firm of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld.

Impregnable in his 22nd District, which stretches from southwest Houston into Fort Bend and Brazoria counties, DeLay has steadily climbed the rungs of power in the House, repeatedly clashing with and challenging Gingrich for primacy. He was elected whip in 1994, running against Representative Bob Walker of Pennsylvania, the candidate handpicked by Newt. "They needed a Rottweiler," says Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute. "And there aren't many members who have that kind of toughness." Recognizing that he is too divisive a figure to become Speaker of the House, Delay has instead decided to remain in the background and act as kingmaker. Three years after becoming whip, he helped organize an ill-fated conspiracy that almost toppled Gingrich in 1997, aiming to replace him as Speaker with Paxon. Finally, when Gingrich collapsed in 1998, DeLay engineered the elevation of his chief deputy whip, Dennis Hastert of Illinois, who had managed his 1994 campaign for majority whip, as Speaker of the House. Immediately afterward, in the starkest display of his newfound power, DeLay hammered the House Republicans into line over the impeachment of President Clinton.

Second, and intimately connected to his power as whip, is DeLay's unrivaled ability to mobilize campaign cash and outside special interests to back the Republican agenda. Money is what makes DeLay's political machines inside and outside the House mesh. In the mid-1990s, DeLay took over as the GOP's liaison to K Street, and he charged into that task with zest. Wielding Republican control of Congress like a club, he not only began setting virtual quotas on PACs and other campaign contributions to the Republican side but kept running totals of corporate PACs and law firms that gave money to Democrats, threatening to stall their priorities if they didn't tilt far enough toward the GOP.

For the past several years, DeLay, Blunt and a couple of dozen major players from K Street have held regular Wednesday get-togethers, including Paxon, Rusbuldt and lobbyists from the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the National Restaurant Association, the American Trucking Associations and lobbyists from several of the key law firms and corporate offices in town. "It's been relatively

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informal," says Blunt. "It doesn't have a name, and it's not always the same people." Acting as a Kitchen Cabinet, the group would formulate strategy on legislative priorities, then parcel out the heavy lifting to build outside pressure on members of the House, often forming task forces on issues from the military to energy to healthcare. As an example, says Blunt, Mike Baroody of NAM organized about 100 lobbyists to help pass the GOP's $700 billion tax cut last session.

Though DeLay is often painted as a pillar of the Christian right, he is not necessarily a reliable ally on Capitol Hill, compared with, say, majority leader Dick Armey. "DeLay is committed to our issues, but business and tax issues seem much more dear to his heart," says Michael Bowman, vice president for government relations at the Family Research Council. "He's the K Street guy. You don't see us around those tables." DeLay says that his Christian faith was reinvigorated after watching a video by James Dobson, who founded FRC and who leads the Colorado-based Focus on the Family. That video, says DeLay, "turned my life around when I first came to Congress. He brought me back to Christ." Still, on issues like trade and gambling, says Bowman, DeLay always casts his lot with the corporate interests, not the conservative Christian groups.

DeLay's likely plan is to orchestrate a relentless series of incremental steps that cumulatively advance the right's agenda.

DeLay's zealotry in courting K Street's lobbyists and campaign donors has, from time to time, gotten him embroiled in controversy. Three years ago he kicked up a storm when he publicly attacked the giant Electronic Industries Association for having the gall to name a conservative Democrat, former Oklahoma Representative Dave McCurdy, to lead the group. DeLay, who wanted Paxon to get the job, called it "an insult to the majority to hire a partisan Democrat." When DeLay threatened to hold up legislation that the association wanted, Democrats and good-government groups cried foul, and the GOP-controlled House ethics committee slapped DeLay with a mild rebuke.

Still, DeLay minces no words in demanding that overcautious lobbyists, who often hedge their political bets by giving to candidates on both sides of the aisle, stick with the Republicans. "We don't like to deal with people who are trying to kill the revolution," he says, referring to Democratic-leaning K Street types. "We know who they are. The word is out."

More recently, a shadowy network of partisan political organizations set up under DeLay's umbrella to collect both regulated and unregulated campaign cash led Representative Patrick Kennedy to file a racketeering lawsuit against DeLay and his allies. Though the suit itself was a blatant political stunt, it did serve to highlight the fast-and-loose money-changing by the majority whip's organizations, collectively dubbed "DeLay Inc." Scott Hatch, a former DeLay aide who headed the National Republican Campaign Committee, told the *Washington Post* in 1999, "DeLay Incorporated is one of the most savvy, aggressive political teams ever built."

DeLay Inc. starts with Americans for a Republican Majority PAC (ARMPAC), a leadership PAC that collected $3.4 million in 2000, more than doubling its '98 total, with contributions from banks, oil companies, drug-makers, Merrill Lynch, Microsoft, Philip Morris and the National Rifle Association. Key DeLay aides—including Jim Ellis, ARMPAC's director; Ed Buckham, DeLay's former chief of staff and closest political adviser; and Karl Gallant, ARMPAC's former director—then helped set up or fund the Republican Majority Issues Committee (RMIC), Americans for Economic Growth, the U.S. Family Network and ROMP (Retain Our Majority Program), all of which were designed to funnel campaign cash and organize support for House members in close races.

Most controversial was RMIC. Taking advantage of a series of loopholes in campaign laws and Federal Election Commission rules, DeLay's RMIC announced its intention to raise $25 million for House Republicans, taking donations in unlimited amounts of money, not disclosing the donors' identities and then using the money to run commercials in key House districts. The concept behind RMIC was an unprecedented end run around the FEC, giving rise to copycat groups and threatening yet another major unraveling of campaign finance regulation. DeLay's blatant, in-your-face defense of RMIC led to a major outcry last summer, and, over DeLay's objections, Congress passed a bill regulating these "Section 527" organizations, forcing them to disclose their donors and putting a severe crimp into DeLay Inc. Yet DeLay remains the Republican Party's fundraiser-in-chief and, along with Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, its staunchest opponent of campaign finance reform.

For Bush, DeLay's sometime recklessness is worrisome, though his power in Congress will be indispensable to the President-elect. Most likely DeLay will keep his raucous partisanship under control while helping to advance Bush's conservative agenda. One indication of DeLay's ability to restrain his baser instincts came during the 2000 campaign, when the majority whip stayed on-message with the Bush team, not rocking the Congressional boat and coordinating with Austin on issues like tax cuts, a patients' bill of rights, a prescription drug benefit for Medicare and other hot-button issues.

If DeLay does go overboard, it's likely to be on the environment. He ran a pest-control business in Texas before going into politics, and the former exterminator seems to harbor a pathological distaste for the Environmental Protection Agency, which he once compared to the Gestapo. After 1995 DeLay tried to repeal the Clean Air Act, fought to cut the EPA's enforcement budget by a third and helped add a series of environmental riders to appropriations bills in close coordination with lobbyists for polluters. In addition, he's been the chief backer of Project Relief and similar antiregulatory efforts aimed at a wholesale undoing of health, safety and environmental protections.

If DeLay rallies conservatives to the far-right agenda, he could steer Congress toward a series of bloody shipwrecks over trillion-dollar tax cuts, privatization of Social Security and Medicare, school vouchers and a deregulatory *jihad*. Yet with Congress divided sharply, such a radical agenda would engender enormous opposition, and DeLay knows it. Far more likely, he will orchestrate a relentless series of incremental steps in the first six months of the Bush Administration—including scattered tax cuts, tort

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reform, a late-term-abortion ban and a missile defense system—that cumulatively advance the right's agenda. That strategy will allow him to slowly but steadily pull the entire government to the right, culminating in the development of a budget for 2002 whose thousands of line items—which fund government departments, programs and independent agencies like EPA and OSHA—will by sheer volume overwhelm the ability of liberals and Democrats to block them.

And through all of it, DeLay will remain Bush's implementer, and they are likely to work well together. "Tom DeLay is a Main Street Republican, a blue-collar Republican, and George Bush is more of a white-collar Republican," says Rusbuldt, the insurance lobbyist and DeLay Kitchen Cabinet member. "But I think they complement each other, and I believe they'll work in a collaborative manner and rely on each other's strengths. Neither can be successful without the other." ■

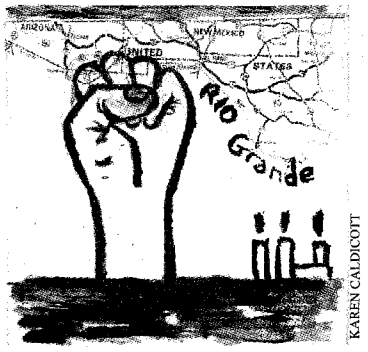
A NEW KIND OF INTERNATIONALISM IS CHALLENGING NEOLIBERAL GLOBALISM.

Unions Without Borders

DAVID BACON

Rio Bravo, Tamaulipas

In the dusty border town of Rio Bravo, just across the Rio Grande from Pharr, Texas, the Duro Bag factory churns out the chichi paper bags sold for a buck at suburban shopping malls throughout the United States.



KAREN CALDICOTT

Eluid Almaguer, an intense, stocky labor activist in his 30s, got a job at the plant in 1998. There he says he saw people lose fingers in machines cutting the cardboard used to stiffen the bottoms of the bags. Safety guards, he explains, were removed from the rollers that imprint designs on the paper lining—the extra time required to clean them was treated as needless lost production. Almaguer recalls that solvent containers didn't carry proper danger warnings, and while workers got dust masks, they were useless for filtering out toxic chemical fumes.

"In terms of safety, well, there just wasn't any," he remembers bitterly.

No help was forthcoming from the union at Duro, a *sección*, or local, of the Paper, Cardboard and Wood Industry Union. The *sección*—part of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), a pillar of support for the country's ruling bureaucracy since the 1930s—has a contract with the company, a protection agreement in which government-affiliated union leaders are paid to guarantee labor peace. But Duro workers did find assistance abroad, in a nascent cross-border solidarity movement that is emerging as labor's answer to the globalization of capital.

The battle to change conditions in this plant is one of many labor conflicts that have erupted in the past decade from one end of the border to the other. Duro is just one of 3,611 foreign-owned factories employing more than 1.3 million people in Mexico, according to the National Association of Maquiladoras. In cities like Rio Bravo, Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana, hundreds of thousands of workers stream through plant gates at each shift change—a human wave pouring into communities of cardboard houses and dirt streets.

As maquiladora-style production has transformed the Mexican economy, it has provided a proving ground as well for a new model of international relationships between workers and unions. This cross-border solidarity movement has created new leverage against employers and has energized the rank-and-file union base in Mexico, Canada and the United States, while providing immediate material support for embattled workers like those at Duro. Five years ago the AFL-CIO administration of John Sweeney broke, in many ways, from the old cold war policy of former AFL-CIO presidents George Meany and Lane Kirkland, which defended free trade, corporate interests and US foreign policy. Yet the newest vision of what an international labor movement could become—based on solidarity from below—is being born not in an office in Washington but in shantytowns here along the border.

For Duro workers, this support network is partly based in the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM), which brings together unions, churches and community organizations in Mexico, Canada and the United States. For more than a decade, the coalition has functioned as a resource for Mexican workers trying to fight an economic policy that uses their low wages to encourage further maquiladora investment.

Four years ago the organization became even more threatening to investors and the political apparatus that protects them when it elected Martha Ojeda as its new director. In one of the first independent union efforts after the passage of NAFTA, Ojeda had led a movement to reform the CTM-affiliated union at the Sony factory in Nuevo Laredo, where she had been a worker and union leader. On April 14, 1994, after Sony fired three union reform activists, thousands of their workmates sat down in the road leading to the plant gate. Sony brought in riot police, who beat them and forced them to return to their jobs. Ojeda fled into political exile in Texas. Until charges were dropped years later, she faced arrest and prison if she returned to Mexico.

The Sony campaign was one of the first to receive the support of a broad movement of US workers, union activists, church and shareholder campaigners, and political and community leaders in the wake of NAFTA. Today, the CJM starts health and safety

David Bacon is a writer and photographer, associate editor of Pacific News Service and a former union organizer.

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groups in maquiladoras, trains workers to exercise their rights and helps them democratize their unions and organize independent ones. The coalition maintains a trinational network of activists who bring pressure to bear on employers when plant struggles break out.

At Duro, with CJM support, workers began the effort to change conditions by trying to enforce provisions of the union-protection agreement (and Mexican law) that, at least on paper, guarantee overtime pay, profit-sharing and other rights. As an initial step they expelled the *sección*'s general secretary, José Angel Garcia Garces, whom they viewed as too close to company managers. In his place, the members elected Almaguer.

Duro's vice president of plastics, Bill Forstrom, says wages start at 60 pesos a day (about $6). A gallon of milk in the supermarket costs 20 pesos—a third of a day's work. According to Consuelo Moreno, a Duro worker, "My daughter had to drop out of school this year, because we didn't have the money for her to continue."

Nevertheless, says Almaguer, "people were willing to work at bad-paying jobs. But not under those conditions." The new leaders brought repeated grievances before the plant's human relations manager, Alejandro de la Rosa. "We'd take [our complaints] to his office, and he'd throw us out," Almaguer says. "The company was in violation of at least 50 percent of the contract." In October 1999 the company fired Almaguer. The union's leaders in Mexico City cooperated, excluding him from union membership. Police and guards were called into the plant. But after three days of turmoil, workers forced Almaguer's reinstatement as general secretary. Then, on April 14, 400 workers refused to go to work as a protest against abusive treatment, and were later joined by 800 more.

'We just think everyone should have human rights, and not just in Mexico—in the US too.' —Texas union official Rick de la Cruz

This past spring the contract at Duro expired, and workers drew up a list of demands for a new agreement. They asked for two pairs of safety shoes each year, work clothes, contributions to a savings plan and a doctor at the plant to take care of injuries. "The company said it owned the factory—they would decide what would be done here," Almaguer recalls.

When workers wouldn't budge, their union's national officials signed a new agreement with the company on June 11, ignoring their demands. By then, workers had decided that enforcing the protection agreement was no longer possible. They struck again. And in front of the factory gates, they began organizing a new, independent and democratic union. "In the past, the company was always able to buy off our union leaders. Always," Moreno emphasizes. "And we paid the price. We can only change things if we have a union the company can't control."

In the face of fierce opposition, CJM helped even the odds for the workers. The coalition assisted the strikers at Duro as they chased Tamaulipas's governor, Tomás Yarrington, around the state for two months. Whenever he appeared in public, workers unfurled banners demanding LIBERTAD SINDICAL (the right to belong to a union of their own choosing). Meanwhile, determined women, often with their children beside them, confronted police outside the plant and camped out in Rio Bravo's main plaza. CJM activists were arrested with the strikers and unleashed a flood of letters and faxes about Yarrington and company officials.

Cooperating with the CJM, Francisco Hernández Juárez of the National Workers Union (UNT), Mexico's new independent union federation, organized a public protest in August, bringing to the town of Reynosa hundreds of advocates of independent unionism from Mexico and the United States. In the face of such pressure the Tamaulipas labor board finally granted the Duro union legal status. Workers have yet to negotiate a new contract, and 150 remain fired. Almaguer's house, made of shipping pallets and cardboard, was burned down in an arson attack on October 31, a crime local police refuse to investigate. "This fire was intentional," he says. "They were trying to wipe us off the map, and now my home is just ashes."

The UNT, which is a growing presence on the border today, estimates that only 50,000 of the country's 650,000 union contracts are actually negotiated with worker participation. "The rest are simply protection agreements," explains UNT vice president José Luis Hernández. "The people who benefit from these contracts are a kind of mafia. To get rid of them is going to require a virtual war."

Feeling the threat, employers and those union leaders who stand to lose their protected status accuse Duro workers of being pawns manipulated by US unions and the CJM. The *El Bravo* newspaper refers to Martha Ojeda as a professional agitator and accused Almaguer of being paid to organize the work stoppage. Tamaulipas CTM leader Leocadio Mendoza Reyes accused Ojeda of mounting a "dirty war" against the union confederation to "destabilize" the maquiladoras and scare companies into relocating jobs to the United States.

Rick de la Cruz, a vice president of Local 4-314 of the US Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers, who went to the Duro protest with a group of fellow workers from his Texas plant, says those charges are ridiculous. "If that work leaves Mexico, it's not coming back to the United States—it's going somewhere workers have even fewer rights," he says. "We just think everyone should have human rights, and not just in Mexico—in the US too." (Even Forstrom points out that the Rio Bravo plant's labor-intensive production competes mainly with China and Indonesia. "We're in Mexico to take advantage of inexpensive labor," he says.)

Accusations of foreign interference were likewise employed to suppress an independent union effort that had international support in Tijuana. In June 1997 workers at the Han Young plant, which welds truck frames for Tijuana's huge Hyundai industrial complex, began a campaign to raise wages and eliminate serious safety hazards. They quickly discovered, however, that the company had a protection contract. Supported by the San Diego–based Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers, the independent October 6 Union for Industry and Commerce won legal status after work stoppages and a hunger strike, during which workers chained themselves to the doors of Tijuana's city hall. The conflict garnered further international attention when US Representative David Bonior used it to help

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defeat the Clinton Administration's proposal for fast-track authority to negotiate an extension of NAFTA in 1997.

When workers struck over company stonewalling in 1998, however, the Baja California labor board ruled their strike illegal. That decision was overruled three times in Mexican federal court, yet for two years Tijuana and Baja California authorities have called in the police to remove the strikers' picket lines, burn their strike flags and escort strikebreakers into the plant—even though in Mexico, it is illegal for a company to hire and operate with strikebreakers during a legal strike.

Lawlessness reached a new height on June 24, when the Mexican Labor Ministry organized a "Seminar on Union Freedom in Mexico" in part to explain two new agreements it had signed with the US Labor Department in May. The agreements settled a case brought under NAFTA's labor side agreement over the violation of workers' rights at Han Young. Strikers and their supporters went to the meeting, held in Tijuana's swanky Camino Real Hotel. As they quietly walked down the aisle carrying their banners, looking for space to sit, dozens of men in the crowd sprang from their seats. A gang of young toughs affiliated with a government-controlled union beat the vastly outnumbered strikers with fists and feet, driving them out of the hotel.

Mexican labor leader Benedicto Martínez says his government is good at 'finding reasons not to enforce its own laws protecting workers.'

Three US Labor Department representatives attended the Tijuana seminar, led by Lewis Karesh, acting secretary of the National Administrative Office. "I'm disappointed to see what happened," he said, adding that "I was glad to see [Mexican Labor Sub-Secretary Javier] Moctezuma come out to talk to the workers." But according to Steve Beckman, a staff member at the international department of the United Auto Workers and a member of the NAO's advisory committee, "The US should have walked out of the Tijuana meeting and called it a disgrace, met with the workers involved, and demanded punishment of those responsible for the beatings." Instead, Labor Secretary Alexis Herman wrote a letter to the United Electrical Workers (UE) and United Steelworkers essentially blaming the strikers for bringing the violence down on their own heads. "Members of the audience asked the representatives to move, but they continued the demonstration," her letter says. Moctezuma himself "reiterated his government's commitment to improving workers' freedom of association rights," Herman declared, concluding that the meeting "was organized in conformity with those commitments."

The incident is an apt metaphor for NAFTA's abysmal record in enforcing workers' rights. Since the treaty went into effect in January 1994, almost twenty labor complaints have been filed on behalf of Mexican workers. The highest-profile cases have been those at Han Young and at another plant in Mexico City, ITAPSA. At both factories, US and Mexican unions alleged that workers were prevented from exercising their legal right to organize independent unions. Additional complaints also alleged that Mexico failed to enforce its health and safety laws at the plants. The ITAPSA complaint charged especially dangerous conditions, with workers routinely exposed to asbestos, a known source of lung cancer.

Under the NAFTA process, the NAO held a series of hearings and concluded that the Mexican government had failed to enforce its worker protection laws. In May US Labor Secretary Herman and her Mexican counterpart, Mariano Palacios Alcocer, settled the cases. Mexico agreed to hold two seminars to discuss better protection for workers organizing independent unions and better enforcement of health and safety laws. The Tijuana meeting was the first of the two; another will take place in Mexico City, where ITAPSA is located. But the agreements do not require the Mexican government to do anything concrete to change the situation of workers in either plant. "We're extremely disappointed," says Robin Alexander, director of international affairs for the United Electrical Workers, which supported the independent Mexican Authentic Labor Front (FAT) in its fight at ITAPSA. "We expected there would be a more significant outcome."

While NAFTA's labor side agreement does not assign penalties for denying workers their right to form independent unions, Mexico could have been fined a percentage of its export earnings, a potentially huge amount of money, for health and safety violations. With the settlement agreements, that possibility was removed. "Nothing will actually change at ITAPSA," says FAT leader Benedicto Martínez. "The Mexican government has a long history of finding reasons not to enforce its own laws protecting workers."

As a result of all the complaints filed since 1994, only one of the many workers fired in Mexico for independent union activity has been rehired, and not a single contract has been signed. A small number of cases have been filed over the failure of US labor law to protect workers here as well, with a similar lack of concrete results. Karesh insists that because the treaty is government-to-government, "we can't get a particular worker's job back or try to resolve cases in favor of particular groups of workers."

Despite the beatings (which received almost no coverage in the US press), NAO complaints continue to be filed. A recent one, alleging violations of health and safety as well as labor rights in Breed Technology's Custom Trim/Auto Trim plants, was filed by the CJM and the Comité Fronterizo Obrera (the Border Women Workers Committee) in September. While Mexican organizations believe NAO complaints have limited value, they nevertheless feel they keep their government under pressure and provide a forum for continuing to denounce violations. The root problem with NAFTA and its side agreements, however, remains: Protecting workers' rights requires the US government to promote the very conditions that undermine the profit-making that NAFTA was designed to further, a fundamental conflict that tends to be ignored amid pressure to link trade agreements and labor rights. During the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle (and since), the Clinton Administration praised the NAFTA process, arguing that trade agreements could protect rights while boosting profits—a position intended to get US unions to accept neoliberal economic reforms and the basic trade structure.

One way out of the NAO box is for US, Canadian and Mexican unions to build longer-range relationships, going beyond individual campaigns. The UE and the FAT have a "strategic

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organizing alliance," in which the two unions have supported each other since their first joint campaign challenged General Electric in Ciudad Juárez in 1994. Both unions root their cross-border relationship among rank-and-file members, who visit one another's plants. The relationship respects the autonomy of each union and its decision-making process, undermining accusations that the Mexican union is simply a tool of US labor.

At ITAPSA, the UE and the FAT initiated an alliance of all the unions representing plants owned by its parent corporation, Echlin Industries, now part of the Dana auto-parts giant. Such alliances are just beginning to take shape, but they hold real promise: If workers had strong, independent unions at all the Mexican, Canadian and US plants of a given company, they could share information about contract terms and wages, and eventually assist one another in bargaining. In the event of a conflict with the parent company, simultaneous job action in all three countries could prevent it from shifting production across borders to defeat unions.

But without a level economic playing field from country to country, corporations will continue to shift production to where wages and costs are lowest. Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch says the US Labor Department has certified that more than 500,000 US workers have lost their jobs because of NAFTA—a vast undercount, in most expert opinion. Cornell professor Kate Bronfenbrenner has documented the doubling of instances, since NAFTA passed, in which employers have stifled organizing efforts of US workers by threatening to relocate production.

The post-NAFTA record in Mexico is even worse. The Mexican government admits the loss of more than a million jobs in 1995 alone. That year's peso devaluation cut the standard of living in half for most workers. Even before NAFTA's passage, the disparity between US and Mexican wages was growing. During the past two decades of economic reforms, the income of Mexican workers has lost 76 percent of its purchasing power. According to economist and former Mexican Senator Rosalbina Garavito, Mexican salaries were a third of those in the United States up to the 1970s. They are now less than an eighth—even a twelfth or fifteenth, depending on the industry.

Mercedes Gema Lopez Limón, professor at the University of Baja California in Mexicali, argues that the worsening conditions of Mexican workers are a direct result of the impact of neoliberal economic reforms, especially the privatization of the state sector of the Mexican economy. "Our government and corporations are using privatization to do away with unions entirely," she says. While three-quarters of the Mexican work force belonged to unions three decades ago, less than 30 percent does today. In the state-owned oil company, PEMEX, for instance, union membership still hovers at 72 percent. But as the collateral petrochemical industry was privatized over the past decade and a half, the unionization rate fell to 7 percent. If US unions can't find a way to support Mexican unions battling this wave, there won't be much of a labor movement left to reform.

The cross-border solidarity movement has only begun to tackle this problem. In the early 1990s, when 10,000 Mexico City bus drivers lost their jobs in the privatization of the Route 100 transit system and their leaders were imprisoned on trumped-up fraud

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charges, leaders of the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union visited them in jail, delivering a check for $5,000. The union also sent delegations to visit Mexican ports, looking for unions and workers interested in mounting a fight to stop port privatization.

Then, in 1999, the AFL-CIO itself supported the copper miners' strike at Cananea, just sixty miles south of the Arizona border. The workers sought to stop massive layoffs several years after the mine had been sold by the state to Grupo Mexico, in partnership with the American Smelting and Refining Company. Led by state AFL-CIO representative Gerry Acosta, caravans of pickup trucks laden with food and supplies snaked their way from the United States to the tiny mountain town in the Sonora desert, where strikers had occupied the mine. Meanwhile, the AFL-CIO's office in Mexico City tried to encourage the union's national leaders to support the fight. In the end, however, the Mexican government sent in troops and, facing the threat of bloodshed, the miners retreated. Hundreds lost their jobs.

Last year the Mexican Electrical Workers, one of the country's oldest and most democratic unions, successfully fought the privatization of the Power and Light Company of central Mexico, collecting more than 2.7 million signatures within three weeks. The new Mexican administration of Vicente Fox, however, whose National Action Party dislodged the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party for the first time in seventy-one years, supports further neoliberal reforms. Fox has already announced that electricity privatization is on his agenda.

Mexican unions, especially progressive and independent ones, perceive US pressure behind the IMF loan conditions and their government's neoliberal policies. And while US labor's solidarity work focuses on the growth of US-owned maquiladoras on the border, Mexican unions actually view privatization as a much greater threat. It would therefore be a powerful gesture of solidarity for the US labor federation to call on our government to stop pushing such measures. AFL-CIO president John Sweeney could even go to Mexico City and link arms with Mexican union leaders at the head of their next antiprivatization march. Or, even better, US unions could send delegations of their own, on a continuing basis, at the invitation of their Mexican counterparts.

In 1995, after being elected AFL-CIO secretary treasurer, Rich Trumka called for a different direction for the federation's international relationships. "The cold war has gone," he declared. "It's over. We want to be able to confront multinationals as multinationals ourselves now. If a corporation does business in fifteen countries, we'd like to be able to confront them as labor in fifteen countries. It's not that we need less international involvement, but it should be focused toward building solidarity, helping workers achieve their needs and their goals here at home."

Trumka's statement is not just an expression of good sentiments from an enlightened labor leader but a response to movement from labor's rank and file. Every time a struggle like Duro begins, US labor activists start heading south, while those from Mexico come north. Solidarity has captured the imagination of labor's activist core. It is still very difficult for border workers and their allies to muster sufficient economic pressure in the United States to force major corporations to respect workers' rights, much less change US and Mexican government policies, which deepen poverty and lend the companies political cover. But a new kind of internationalism is beginning to shape labor's political direction in both the United States and Mexico. And that has the potential to give workers the power not only to criticize the new world economic order but to change it. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

a criminal conspiracy." Thanks a lot. How much of its history does it reduce to a criminal conspiracy? Half? Three-quarters?

Are there any historians out there to say straight out that American Communists, despite their sins, were patriots who advocated something more human than corporate capitalism for this land of ours and fought hard and effectively for social justice in the meanwhile?

Yes, they were starry-eyed over the emergence of the world's first nation to proclaim itself socialist and place people above profits, and yes, they were lamentably slow to accept the reality that Stalinism had butchered the socialist dream. But when "liberal anticommunists" were doing diddly about the shame of raw racial discrimination, it was the Communists who exposed the Scottsboro rape frameup, who put their bodies where their mouths were, going South to work for black voting rights, who with the black newspapers launched the campaign that ended the apartheid ban in our national pastime, who did the indispensable on-the-ground organizing in the creation of industrial unionism.

If the Communist movement was the malign spy apparatus Radosh, Klehr, Haynes and Weisberg say it was, how would they explain its attraction to so many of the world's most leading creative men and women?

On a personal note, I worked for the Communist *Daily Worker* for twenty years and found my colleagues to be principled idealists, the salt of the American earth.

Will history, dictated by "liberal (?) anticommunists," harden by default into the "spy" falsehood for this significant part of the American radical left? LESTER RODNEY

MY SECRET LOVE'S NO SECRET ANYMORE

Frisco, Colo.

■ I've been a subscriber to *The Nation* for more than twenty years, and I'm finally getting off my butt and writing. I have a confession. I'm in love with Katha Pollitt's column. Whenever I'm not sure how to express my feelings, I wait for Pollitt's column, and there they are—my feelings articulated perfectly.

I live in a rural community without residential mail service, so I have to drive to the post office. I empty my box every couple of days, and when I get my *Nation*, the first thing I do is open it to Katha's column and savor her comments paragraph by paragraph. Then I sit back in my minivan smiling as I hug my *Nation*. And that warm, fuzzy feeling lasts all day, because Katha's column makes me realize that I have a choice. I can either become depressed, or I can laugh, or I can do a bit of both.

Am I alone? I can't be the only reader whose idea of a good time is settling back into my minivan high-back seat in front of the post office in a one-stoplight town in the mountains of Colorado reading Katha's column. So why doesn't it appear weekly? IRA WERTENTEIL

CORRECTION

■ In Robert Sherrill's "Death Trip: The American Way of Execution" [Jan. 8/15], Gary Gilmore was executed by the state of Utah, not Nevada, and Ronald Reagan ran on the death penalty in California in 1966 (and again in 1970), not 1972.

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By Lance Compa.
Human Rights Watch. 213 pp. Paper $15.

In their campaigns for the White House, the major-party candidates—even the one backed by labor—spent little time debating labor-law reform.

Nevertheless, the AFL-CIO had hoped that a Gore victory and Democratic gains in Congress would lead to strengthening of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) or, at least, union-friendly appointments to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Continued Republican control of Congress now eliminates the possibility of the former, while Bush's court-won victory makes the latter highly unlikely. In fact, when our new President gets through filling three vacancies on the NLRB early this year, his appointees will insure that the failure of labor law—a scandal exposed in different ways by former NLRB chairman William Gould in *Labored Relations* and by lawyer Lance Compa in the recent Human Rights Watch report *Unfair Advantage*—continues to thwart union organizing for the next four years.

Since the AFL-CIO began putting greater emphasis on membership recruitment in 1995, there have, of course, been important new gains. But some of the most significant victories involved organizing campaigns in which unions used their bargaining or political clout—where they still have it—to secure recognition in new units without using Labor Board certification procedures. For tens of millions of workers in the private sector, bypassing the law is not an option—and, for better or worse, the sixty-five-year-old NLRA continues to shape organizing strategies in many key industries.

Long hailed as the "Magna Carta of American labor," the NLRA (or Wagner Act) is definitely showing signs of age. The act was designed in 1935 to promote collective bargaining as a peaceful alternative to the many violent, Depression-era battles over union recognition. Its New Deal sponsors viewed unionization as a necessary corrective to the "inequality of bargaining power" between individual workers and management. To referee workplace disputes, Congress created the NLRB, which conducts representation elections, awards bargaining rights based on them and investigates "unfair labor practices" by employers that might discourage organizing or prevent workers from negotiating a union contract.

Bush will fill three vacancies on the NLRB early this year—will they insure the continuing failure of labor law?

But the limited remedies, light penalties and secret-ballot elections available under the NLRA are meaningful only if its administration is swift and efficient. In few other areas of the law is there greater truth to the axiom that "justice delayed is justice denied." When union votes are stalled for months, union victories tied up in litigation for years, bad-faith bargaining goes unpunished and fired union supporters get reinstated (if at all) long after an organizing campaign has ended, management wins—even if the board ultimately rules otherwise.

The selection of NLRB members—and the agency's influential general counsel—is determined by who controls the White House and what kind of nomination deals are brokered with the Senate. (Functioning at full strength, the board consists of three appointees, including the chairman, from the President's own party and two from the opposition party.) However, as the AFL-

As a lawyer or union organizer, Steve Early has been helping workers deal with the NLRB for the past twenty-five years.

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CIO argued in its last major campaign for labor-law reform in the late 1970s, unfair-labor-practice victims need more than a sympathetic NLRB majority or efficient functioning by the agency's 2,000 career employees around the country. The law itself must be repaired.

The enormous gap between workers' legal rights on paper and the reality of NLRA enforcement under Democrats and Republicans alike is most effectively documented in *Unfair Advantage. Labored Relations* also describes how bad substantive decisions, "the creakiness of the NLRA's administrative procedures" and its "lack of effective remedies" have undermined worker organizing and strike activity in recent decades. But the bulk of Gould's memoir is devoted to refighting the personal political battles that occupied him during his four and a half years as a Clinton appointee on the NLRB. Gould's book thus invites comparison with *Locked in the Cabinet,* Robert Reich's glibly amusing account of his stint as Clinton's Secretary of Labor. Both men assumed their Washington posts—Reich at the Labor Department and Gould at the board—after a career in academia. Even before Clinton nominated Gould in 1993, Reich had tapped him (based on his work as a Stanford University law professor and respected arbitrator) to serve on the Dunlop Commission, a panel of experts convened to recommend labor-law changes.

At the time, Gould had just offered his own ideas on this subject in a book titled *Agenda for Reform.* In it he called for many of the same corrective measures now advocated by Human Rights Watch: employer recognition of unions based on signed authorization cards rather than contested elections; imposition of first-contract terms by an arbitrator when the parties can't reach agreement by themselves; greater use of injunctive relief to secure quicker reinstatement of workers fired for union activity; a ban on permanent replacement of economic strikers; and heavier financial penalties for labor-law violators.

Needless to say, Senate Republicans weren't too keen on Gould's proposals and kept his nomination to the NLRB dangling for almost a year. In fact, even Reich's labor-law-reform panel—which Gould left prior to being confirmed as NLRB chairman—failed to promote these much-needed changes. Instead, the Dunlop Commission stressed the importance of amending the NLRA so management-dominated "employee participation" schemes could flourish even more widely as an alternative to unions. Repackaged as the Teamwork for Employees and Managers (or TEAM) Act and adopted by Congress after the GOP took over in 1994, this anti-union legislation was ultimately vetoed by Clinton—after frantic labor lobbying.

To survive his contentious confirmation process (and avoid the fate of fellow African-American Lani Guinier, whose nomination to a top Justice Department post was dropped by Clinton when her writings as a law professor were attacked by the right), Gould played up his credentials as a "professional neutral." He proclaimed that his goal in Washington would be "to reduce polarization both at the board and also between labor and management." Equipped with what turned out to be a serious lack of diplomatic skills, Gould might have had an easier time trying to bring peace to the Middle East.

Naming Gould to the board was an expression of Clinton's political centrism; Gould played up his own record as a 'professional neutral.'

During Gould's tenure, Congressional Republicans sought to cripple the NLRB's operations with budget cuts, harassing oversight hearings and nonstop political sniping. Positive initiatives, like general counsel Fred Feinstein's attempt to get more federal court orders reinstating fired workers while their cases were being litigated, became a lightning rod for conservative criticism. Under these trying circumstances, Gould, Feinstein and pro-labor board members like Sarah Fox and the late Margaret Browning needed to stick together and coordinate their strategy in the face of common adversaries. Gould, however, quickly fell out with his colleagues in a fit of pique over their failure "to accord me stature and defer to my leadership." His "leadership" soon took the form of public feuding with, and criticism of, his fellow Clinton appointees—combined with attention-getting public statements about many of the leading labor-management controversies of the day. Even when he was on the right side of these disputes, his ill-timed interventions had the effect of exacerbating the NLRB's political problems.

In 1998, for example, Gould injected himself into the debate about a state ballot initiative in California that would have required unions to obtain the individual consent of their members before using dues money for political purposes. Gould's statement of opposition to this Republican-backed "paycheck protection" scheme correctly noted that it would "cripple a major source of funding for the Democratic Party." When his testimony was briefly posted on the NLRB's website after being presented to state legislators, it created such a ruckus that even Congressional Democrats generally supportive of labor and the board raised the possibility that Gould should resign to avert further Republican retribution against the agency.

Ironically, Gould's batting average at the board shows that he was not as much a union partisan as his business critics claimed. According to a recent law-review analysis by professor Joan Flynn, Gould's "votes in disputed cases were considerably less predictable than those of his colleagues from management or union-side practice... [they] broke down in a much less lopsided fashion: 159 for the 'union' position and 46 for the 'management' position." In contrast, when Ronald Reagan tried to change the NLRB's alleged pro-union tilt during his Administration, his chairman was a management-side lawyer—Donald Dotson, a figure no less controversial in the 1980s than Gould was in the '90s. Did Dotson pursue Gould's stated goal of "return[ing] the Board to the center to promote balance"? Of course not. Despite equally hostile Congressional oversight by members of the then-Democratic majority, Dotson openly promoted a Right-to-Work Committee agenda, defending management interests just as zealously as he had when he was on the corporate payroll.

Naming Gould to lead the board was, thus, very much an expression of Clinton's own political centrism. Unhappily for labor, Gould's unexpected personal showboating, squabbling with would-be allies and what Flynn calls his "near-genius for irritating Congress" impeded, rather than aided, the administrative tinkering that Clinton appointees were able to do at the board during his tenure. Vain, impolitic and—in the view of some critics—hopelessly naïve, Gould often did as much harm as good. In this respect, he was not unlike the Dunlop Commission, in that Reich's vehicle for building a political consensus on labor-law reform instead fed right-wing attempts to weaken the NLRA.

Gould's defense of his record seems designed to avoid the kind of flak that Reich received over his memoir's fanciful reconstruction of private and even public exchanges with various Washington notables. *Labored Relations* quotes extensively from the author's minutiae-filled daily journal,

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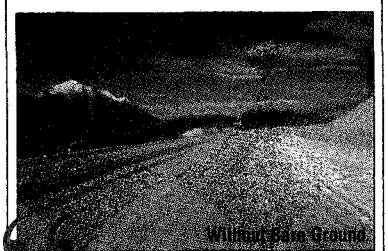

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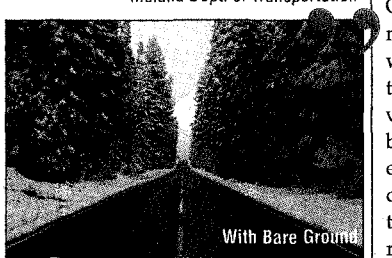

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leaving the impression that no such literary license has been employed. Unfortunately, Gould lacks Reich's self-deprecatory humor and acute sense of irony. The author's tedious recitation of his speaking dates, telephone calls, case conferences, lunch and dinner conversations, etc., will be a hard slog for anyone but specialists in the field or ex-colleagues searching for critical comments about themselves (of which there are many).

Outside the Beltway and the "labor bar," settling old scores about who did what to whom as part of the "Clinton Board" is much less a preoccupation than the difficulty of defending workers' rights under any administration. *Unfair Advantage* does a much better job of keeping this big picture in focus, in particular by documenting the rising toll of workers fired for what, in board jargon, is called "protected concerted activity." In the 1950s, author Lance Compa reports, "workers who suffered reprisals for exercising the right to freedom of association numbered in the hundreds each year. In the 1960s, the number climbed into the thousands, reaching slightly over 6,000 in 1969. By the 1990s, more than 20,000 workers each year were victims of discrimination for union activity—23,580 in 1998, the most recent year for which figures are available."

The "right to freedom of association" is, of course, enshrined in international human rights standards that the United States nominally supports and often seeks to apply to other nations. Compa, a former organizer for the United Electrical Workers who now teaches international labor law at Cornell, exposes the hypocrisy of this official stance in light of persistent NLRB enforcement problems and the structural defects of the NLRA itself. In this Human Rights Watch report, he concludes that "provisions of U.S. law openly conflict with international norms...of freedom of association."

> Millions of workers, including farm workers, household domestic workers and low-level supervisors, are expressly barred from the law's protection of the right to organize. American law allows employers to replace permanently workers who exercise the right to strike, effectively nullifying that right. New forms of employment relationships have created millions of part-time, temporary, sub-contracted and otherwise "atypical" or "contingent" workers whose freedom of association is frustrated by the law's failure to adapt to changes in the economy.

The problem with Compa's sweeping indictment of the status quo is that it contains no strategy for change—other than elevating the debate about what should be done from the lowly sphere of labor-management relations to the higher moral plane of international human rights norms. At the local level, Jobs with Justice coalitions and some AFL-CIO central labor councils around the country are actually trying to build a long-term grassroots campaign to promote greater public support for the right to organize. Not unlike that of Human Rights Watch, their target audience is the same elements of academia, the arts, churches and the liberal middle class that have long displayed admirable concern about human rights violations abroad or discrimination against women, gays and minorities at home.

Public officials, university professors, the clergy, civil rights leaders and neighborhood activists are now being encouraged to intervene in organizing situations to help neutralize illegal management resistance to unionization. Workers' rights activists will find plenty of new ammunition in *Unfair Advantage*, and even some that's buried in *Labored Relations*. Hopefully, their community-based efforts will create an improved climate for organizing—in some parts of the country at least—and put NLRA reform back on the national political agenda of labor's putative allies in the Democratic Party. Yet while having a Democrat in the White House may prove a necessary condition for reform initiatives, it's hardly sufficient—as the Clinton era just proved. Workers who try to form unions will continue to be at risk until Americans elect both a Congress and a President willing to do more than just tinker with our tattered protection of the right to organize. ■

The Führer Furor

PAUL REITTER

HITLER 1936–1945: Nemesis. By Ian Kershaw. Norton. 1,115 pp. $35.

CHAPLINESQUE RAPSCALLION NEW LEADER OF GERMANY'S NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY
—*The Onion*

"I have nothing to say about Hitler." With this line Karl Kraus, turn-of-the-century Vienna's most famous journalist, began his 300-page anti-Hitler invective, *The Third Walpurgis Night.* Kraus's fate has been shared widely. Hitler tickles and tortures the authorial imagination like no other twentieth-century figure. At first as a hero, for the most part, then as a villain, also for the most part, Hitler has been a fantastically popular subject among all kinds of writers since his postputsch courtroom antics transformed him into something much larger than a right-wing rabblerouser. Indeed, between 1923 and 1995, more than 120,000 essays and monographs on Hitler were published. Attenuation seems unlikely. For if it has changed at all, our fascination with Hitler appears to have grown even stronger in the past five years.

And so we should not be surprised by the fact that a lot of books about Hitler have been published recently. Yet there is a twist here; it has to do with quality rather than quantity. We expected more books about Hitler. What we did not expect is that the most prominent of them would be so good. This remark is less cynical than it sounds. Over the years able scholars have produced a very substantial body of excellent research on Hitler. Of course, it would be absurd to regard as unexpected everything that adds to it.

Furthermore, we had reason to hope for significant new contributions. Ideology does not play quite the same role in Hitler studies that it did fifteen years ago. Historians in East Germany tended to treat Hitler as an effect of capitalism, while historians in the West often viewed him in narrowly personal terms, as a deranged, gigantic individual crushing a fragile democratic experiment. But scholars in the West, and especially in West Germany, were not exactly of one opinion with regard both to Hitler's causes and his effects. In the mid-

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1980s, a new revisionist conservatism led to a new contentiousness. At issue was a series of incendiary questions—even the question of whether it was appropriate to ask them: Was Hitler a revolutionary? Which of his policies were rational? Ernst Nolte, who had been drifting steadily away from the trenchant analysis of Nazism he advanced in the early 1960s, went so far as to call Hitler's worldview an understandable reaction to a perceived Bolshevik threat. Just a few months ago, Nolte received one of Germany's most prestigious awards for cultural achievement, which simply confirms what we already knew: Hitler remains an intensely politicized field of inquiry. However, in general, the intellectual atmosphere in this area has improved. It is more open, as are archives in Moscow. And material discovered there—for example, Hitler's skull and a complete copy of Goebbels's diary—has helped to answer old questions.

But discovering new sources will only get you so far. It certainly will not explain a phenomenon as complex as Hitler. Nor will sheer intellectual openness. The great majority of the thousands of open-minded books about Hitler have little interpretive value. In fact, until recently there were only two truly formidable biographies of him: Alan Bullock's *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (1952, revised 1962) and Joachim Fest's *Hitler: A Biography* (1973). We now have a third major biography of Hitler, Ian Kershaw's two-volume masterpiece *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris* (1998) and *Hitler 1936–1945: Nemesis* (2000). It is the best of the three, by far.

Improvements in biographical research do not always imply a general shift in the significance of the subject. Yet that is likely to be the case here. For, again, the publication of Kershaw's biography was accompanied by a procession of incisive and well-researched books: *The Hitler of History* (1997), John Lukacs's useful survey of, and critical engagement with, historical scholarship on Hitler; *Hitler: Diagnosis of a Destructive Prophet* (1999), Fritz Redlich's illuminating "psychography" of Hitler (this should not be confused with "psychohistory": Redlich, who is a psychiatrist, works carefully with relevant sources and examines Hitler's mental condition at every stage of his life, minutely charting the changes, and he does not seek to "solve" the enigma of Hitler's psychopathic behavior by focusing on childhood trauma or a particular psychic disturbance); *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil* (1998), Ron Rosenbaum's extensive

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collection of interviews with scholars, intellectuals and artists who, in some form or other, have tried to "explain Hitler"; and *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship* (1999, German original 1996), Brigitte Hamann's scrupulously researched and intelligently argued account of Hitler's early years in Vienna (1906–13) and of their influence on his later development.

Every one of these books represents an attempt at sustained, comprehensive critical reckoning with Hitler. In the past, the most compelling works on him were often of a very different character. (Consider Eberhard Jäckel's and Sebastian Haffner's shorter, much more synthetic books on Hitler's *Weltanschauung*, which were published in 1969 and 1978.) But if there has been a structural change, what has caused it? Kershaw himself offers an insightful answer. "Reflecting" on Hitler's historical significance in the preface to *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris*, he writes: "Hitler's dictatorship has the quality of a paradigm for the twentieth century." Kershaw also claims that "Hitler's mark on the century" has been "deeper" than anyone's. The implication is clear. Taking leave of the twentieth century means trying to settle our accounts with Hitler, its paradigmatic problem, which, in turn, means engaging in sustained, comprehensive critical analysis. Certainly something close to this seems to be at stake in Rosenbaum's work, and in Hamann's. She suggestively tracks the full extent of Hitler's debt to "twentieth-century culture" by examining his encounter with one of its paradigms: *fin de siècle* Vienna. Kershaw has given us a twenty-first-century biography of Hitler that could have been written only at the end of the twentieth century.

Kershaw's biography is a true "social biography," to use a phrase the great film theorist Siegfried Kracauer coined, in exile, as he wrote about the culture that Hitler's Germany had begun to annihilate. Without a trace of moralism, and without losing himself in quotidian minutiae and psychological speculation, Kershaw nonetheless shadows Hitler the way a conscience might have. He examines Hitler's daily life, as well as his emotional and political development, in vivid detail. At the same time, he situates Hitler's personal narrative within its social context, charting their reciprocal influence and pointing out how Hitler's experiences and attitudes were emblematic of large social trends. And he does so with impressive erudition. The result is a kind of interpretive balance, which is very difficult to bring off in Hitler's case. With him, moving back and forth between the microlevel of personal narrative and the macrolevel of social context entails entering into not so much a hermeneutic circle as a dizzying spiral. For, at a certain point, Hitler's narrative begins to reshape—as few, if any, personal narratives have—the social context that shaped it, only, of course, to be shaped again itself by the context it reshaped.

Neither Bullock nor Fest came close to producing a real social biography, as both of their books focus on the personal narrative. They offer well-informed, penetrating answers to one crucial question: Why did Hitler commit the terrible crimes for which he will be remembered? But neither one makes a serious attempt to shed light on Hitler's path to the chancellorship or to understand how he remained in power for twelve years while executing policies of mass destruction and mass self-destruction. They do not tell us how Hitler became Hitler.

The other formidable biographies—Bullock's and Fest's—did not tell us how Hitler became Hitler. Kershaw's 'social biography' does.

Kershaw's book works so well as social biography because his approach proceeds from a transitional concept: charisma. Elaborating on the argument he developed in *The "Hitler Myth"* (1987), Kershaw invokes charisma as a sociological category. Here charisma is a modern, postliberal structure of authority, one that became possible in Weimar Germany for a number of impersonal reasons. These include the "ignominy of Versailles," the concomitant collective longing for national redemption and the inability of the democratic government to appeal to a strong democratic tradition in Germany.

Charisma is also a psychological category. It can therefore function as a way to mediate between the levels of biographical analysis. And, indeed, Kershaw makes his overriding concern the fateful match between Hitler's personal charisma and Germany's impersonal readiness for charismatic rule. Summing it all up, Kershaw writes, "The Germany which had produced Adolf Hitler had seen its future in his vision, had so readily served him, and had shared in his hubris, had also to share in his nemesis." Germany followed the charismatic leader it "produced" because he envisioned, in just the right way, at just the right time, the Germany it wanted to see.

In *Hubris*, Kershaw explains how Hitler's idiosyncratic "vision" for a "better" future and Germany's receptiveness to it took shape. In *Nemesis*, he tracks the bloody business of implementation. We might expect the second volume of a two-volume Hitler biography to begin in 1933. But Kershaw divides Hitler's life into pre- and post-1936 stages, because 1936 marks "the culminating point of the first phase of the dictatorship." Kershaw wants *Nemesis* to begin with the beginning of the end, with the onset of the "ceaseless radicalization" that persisted until 1945. Both volumes are well written and come equipped with helpful maps and eerie photographs. And because Kershaw keeps his debates with other scholars, as well as his extensive remarks about primary sources, neatly contained in his footnotes, *Hubris* and *Nemesis* read smoothly, remarkably so, given their factual girth and cognitive intricacy. Some chapters are structured as accounts of Hitler's life stages, such as his "dropout" years in Vienna, while others are organized around seminal events, for example, Germany's strategic "miscalculation" during the 1939 Poland crisis. Kershaw puts personal narrative into the foreground when it seems to be of decisive importance. And he does the same with social context. Tellingly, all the chapter headings in *Nemesis* refer to large historical developments, starting, again, with the Nazis' "ceaseless radicalization."

In 1936, according to Kershaw, Hitler was at once more delusional than ever and cannily realistic. His early diplomatic and economic successes had fed his surging megalomania. Both Hitler and the nation that, at the time, overwhelmingly supported him believed that he could achieve whatever he wanted to. Yet Hitler also astutely recognized that his authority could not rest on a foundation of rationally organized domestic prosperity. It would last only as long as he was associated with a "project of national salvation." The pressure to expand, "to radicalize" unremittingly, came from outside as well as from inside his circle.

Kershaw's most original, most provocative claims have to do with the place of Nazi Party leaders in this constellation of causal forces. He insists that even as they used the most cynical images and slogans to manufacture Hitler's charisma, men like Alfred Rosenberg, Heinrich Himmler and especially Joseph Goebbels remained fanatically in Hitler's thrall. As Kershaw

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puts it, they "combined pure belief and impure propaganda." Working closely with Goebbels's complete diary, which proves to be a key new source (Hitler's bond with Goebbels was the closest thing he had to a friendship), Kershaw draws out the full, chilling extent of this belief. He also shows that well into the war, and until the very end, defeat did nothing to shake it. For in taking huge risks and losing, Hitler remained true to the principles that had won him such loyal disciples.

Perhaps even more chilling is Kershaw's account of how these same party leaders influenced the Final Solution. Here again Goebbels's diary is crucially important. More lucidly than other sources, it reveals that Hitler had to be prodded into instituting not only the policy of mass deportations but even the compulsory-identification measure (the yellow Star of David) for Jews living in Germany. Party leaders had urged Hitler to take this latter step in the wake of *Kristallnacht* (November 1938). He resisted it until August 1941, when Goebbels finally "convinced" him to act. And in the summer of 1941, he repeatedly "rejected" Reinhard Heydrich's proposals to make the destruction of Eastern Jewry more systematic. Why? Certainly moral compunction cannot be the answer. According to Kershaw, Goebbels expressed a certain dismay at the inconsistency between Hitler's behavior and his stated principles on the "Jewish Question," yet he never suggested that Hitler had softened his attitude toward the Jews. During this time Hitler continued to cite his own prewar "prophecy," according to which the Jews would be destroyed if they started another world war, and to provide various justifications for large-scale murder. Kershaw speculates that Hitler may have been acting, or not acting, out of denial. For to devise a "Final Solution" before winning the war in the East was to acknowledge that the war could not be won anytime soon. As long as the fiction of imminent victory could be sustained, it made more "sense" to wait for the acquisition of vast new territories. After all, the Nazis were trying to figure out how to dispose of millions of people and had not yet begun to think seriously about gas and ovens.

The problem, for Kershaw, is that Hitler had given up this illusion by the fall of 1941, and yet he remained reluctant to authorize mass deportations and overtly genocidal policies. Hitler did not enumerate his reservations, at least not on records available to us. And so we are left wondering. What is clear is that the solicitations of Heydrich, Himmler and Goebbels had the desired effect—Hitler eventually did license extermination. Yet, as Kershaw stresses, he did so only in the most general terms. Pushing his claim, Kershaw goes so far as to contend, "Whatever the reasons, [Hitler] could never have delivered the sort of speech which, notoriously, Himmler would give in Posen two years later [1943] when he described what it was like to see 1,000 corpses lying side by side and spoke openly of the 'extermination' (*Ausrottung*) of the Jewish people as a 'glorious page in our history....' Even in his inner circle Hitler could never bring himself to speak with outright frankness about the killing of the Jews." Hitler "could not bring himself" to discuss the Holocaust directly, apparently not even with Goebbels. This is an unsettling idea. Indeed, David Irving, the British historian and notorious Hitler apologist, rushes from Hitler's silence to the conclusion that he did not know about the death camps. What Kershaw does is very different. With unrivaled precision and without polemicism, he circumscribes Hitler's unwillingness to speak about the Holocaust, ultimately treating it as a question. Far from exculpating Hitler, Kershaw's move invites further inquiry. *Nemesis* does more than inform exhaustively and explain brilliantly: It points to what remains to be said about Hitler. ■

Behind Mount Rushdie

SUMANA RAYCHAUDHURI

A NEW WORLD. By Amit Chaudhuri. Knopf. 192 pp. $22.

About a year ago, Amit Chaudhuri published in the *Times Literary Supplement* a panoramic survey of the past century or so of Indian writing and its reception in the West. He observed there that the postcolonial Indian novel tends to be celebrated as a hybrid form in the West, with Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* eclipsing all previous Indian writing. Unhappily, critics seem to believe that the postcolonial totality of India can only be articulated by Indian novelists writing in English. Yet the novella, Chaudhuri argued, is an equally important form in the vernaculars (there are around twenty major languages and countless dialects with their individual literary traditions in India), as is the short story, and ellipsis is often more effective than all-inclusiveness in attempting to describe India. The tendency to forget that vernacular Indian literatures existed long before Salman Rushdie's brilliant experiment with magical realism—or Vikram Seth's presentation of India as a mosaic of epic proportions in *A Suitable Boy*—sets a problematic yardstick for judging Indian writing in English. It leads one to think that the Indian narrative is essentially "lush and overblown," whereas the literary traditions of India are actually much more delicately nuanced. Chaudhuri also suggested that hybridization of language is not the only tool for conveying the otherness of perception: Even the correct English of writers like V.S. Naipaul has otherness implicit in it.

Sumana Raychaudhuri has written for many Indian newspapers and is at work on a doctorate.

To Chaudhuri, who is Bengali, this otherness takes the form of returning to older regional traditions of India. His literary forebears include the Bengali writers of what is known as the *kallol jug*—which was roughly around the second quarter of the twentieth century in Bengal—rather than contemporaries like Rushdie or Seth. As such, his novels have strong affinities to a specific movement in Bengali literature that attempted to capture the humdrum and the quotidian, though his audience is more the yuppie Indian who constantly juggles English and the vernacular than the educated Bengali middle-class *bhadralok*. Even the code-switching between Bengali and English—and the occasional Hindi—in Chaudhuri's novels seems to be an attempt to tell the story of the Westernized but ordinary Bengali, rather than hybridization or what Rushdie calls the pickling of language. It is also the story of polyglot India, where most of the population speaks, and habitually switches among, several languages. And mellifluous as Chaudhuri is at times, no one can accuse him of writing overblown prose.

In writing his fourth novel, *A New World*, Chaudhuri seems to have remained true to his critical principles: The result is not quite likely to make readers in Calcutta swoon but a novel that is as much an

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attempt to capture the macrocosm of India in a microcosm as it is an attempt to carry on a particular vernacular tradition in English. And to those who have never been to Calcutta, it offers a refreshingly low-key and intimate insight into the heart of the city.

In *A New World*, a quest for solace brings the protagonist to Calcutta to seek the comforts of the familiar rituals of his parents' home. Jayojit Chatterjee, a not-so-young professor of economics at a Midwestern US college, is back for the summer with his son in tow. Normally, his parents would have been overjoyed. But neither Jayojit nor his parents can get over the fact that the family is now broken, that Jayojit's wife has divorced him. Jayojit has recently won partial custody of his young son, Bonny, and the visit to Calcutta promises to become an annual summer retreat, an escape from his adopted country to the land of his birth.

Divorce has familiarized Jayojit with a new world of frozen pizzas and TV dinners. It also seems to have made him acutely attuned to the harmonies and dissonances of lives around him. One of the clichés about storytelling is that plots are essentially of two kinds—either someone undertakes a journey, or a stranger comes to town. In such a schema, this novel would appear to fall into both categories. Jayojit may not be a stranger visiting Calcutta, but he has certainly moved far from the roots to which he has temporarily returned. He stays with his parents, runs across his neighbors, moves around the city and muses on his married life and the attempt at a second, arranged marriage that he had made on his last visit home a year previously. Daily life in Calcutta is familiar, yet no longer quite familiar. Family photos still clutter the drawing-room table, only now there is a gaping hole in this tapestry of faces—all the pictures of Jayojit's ex-wife Amala have been removed. Her absence haunts the family perhaps more than her presence would have. Nothing sensational happens in Calcutta, not even another attempt at arranging a marriage. Jayojit's visit affects no one but his parents—but the details of a humdrum holiday are meticulously captured.

There is something very familiar about this stillness to anyone who has spent any time in Calcutta. I remember this torpor from countless summer holidays spent in the city, so it is no surprise that Jayojit neglects the book he is planning to write. I also remember vendors selling Kwality ice cream—a brief respite from the oppressive heat, which Bonny yearns for—from pushcarts.

Like New York's pushcart hot dogs and Bangkok's curbside *satays*, Calcutta also has its distinctive street fare—the rolls, *jhaalmuri*, *phuchka* and *bhelpuri* sold by vendors—whose taste simply cannot be replicated elsewhere. Jayojit's brief interaction with a *bhelpuri* seller brings back to this reviewer many memories of the tangy snack, flavored with spiced tamarind water, sold by a particular vendor near Sunny Park in the city. *A New World* speaks to the expatriate reader of little, intimate, everyday things in Calcutta, reminiscent of the way that Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines*, a novel set partly in that city, did a few years ago.

Chaudhuri's book almost self-consciously tries to be different from the usual Indian writing in English. To put things in perspective, consider Raj Kamal Jha's *The Blue Bedspread*, the other novel set in Calcutta that has recently been published in America. An interesting foil to *A New World*, it is nothing if not sensational in plot and incidents. Its narrator is another not-quite-young man, but one who has a secret to reveal—and has just one night to write it all down. In the bedroom a newborn child lies on a blue bedspread; in the adjacent room, the narrator struggles to give voice to a mosaic of stories from his and his sister's past that can be pieced together to reveal the truth, insofar as truth may be known. The idea is clever but the secret obvious from page five onward. Of course, the ingenious aspect of Jha's plot is the frame that the story needs to be written in a matter of hours—which means that any rough edges and disjunctions in the text are automatically to be excused, the way amateurish camera work was in, say, *The Blair Witch Project*. This accounts for inconsistencies in the story line, and the series of deliberately unreliable narrative perspectives only helps further the cause. Judging by its reception in the West, however, he pitched his story to the right audience: the Western critic who, by all appearances, has little idea of what Calcutta is like, is willing to give Jha credit for having done for Calcutta what Joyce did for Dublin (as a reviewer wrote in the *New York Times*). Critics also laud Jha for letting the incestuous cat out of the bag of a repressive India. That particular cat, however, has always roamed at large in Vedic creation myths and vernacular writings. In fact, over a decade ago, Safdar Hashmi, one of India's foremost theater personalities, was assassinated by Hindu fundamentalists for staging one of the earliest mentions of incest in Indian literature: a little-known version

Yuletide All the Time

EDUARDO GALEANO

At the dawn of the fourteenth century, Father Giordano da Rivalto of Florence offered an elegy to cities. He said that they grow "because people take pleasure in being together." Being together, meeting. Now who meets whom? Does hope meet up with reality? Do desires meet up with deeds? And people, do they meet other people? If human relations have been reduced to the relations among things, how many people meet up with things?...

The shopping mall, a store window to top all store windows, lords it over us with its imposing presence. Multitudes make the pilgrimage to this, the grandest of all temples, for celebrating the mass of consumption. Most of the devotees contemplate in ecstasy the things they can't afford, while the buying minority submits to the withering bombardment of relentless sales pitches. Going up and down the escalators the crowds travel the world; they watch mannequins dress in fashions from Paris or Milan and listen to stereos that sound as they would in Chicago, and to see and hear all this you pay no fare. Tourists from the hinterlands or from cities still free of this blessing of modern happiness pose for pictures beside the best-known international brands the way they used to pose in the plaza beneath the statue of a national hero. For poor residents of the outskirts, notes Argentine sociologist Beatriz Sarlo, the traditional weekend trip downtown has been replaced by an excursion to one of these urban oases. Spruced up and dressed in their Sunday best, the guests arrive at the party well aware they can only be wallflowers.

Excerpted from Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-Glass World *(Metropolitan).* *© 2000 by Eduardo Galeano. Translation © 2000 by Mark Fried. Used by permission of the publisher and Susan Bergholz Literary Services.*

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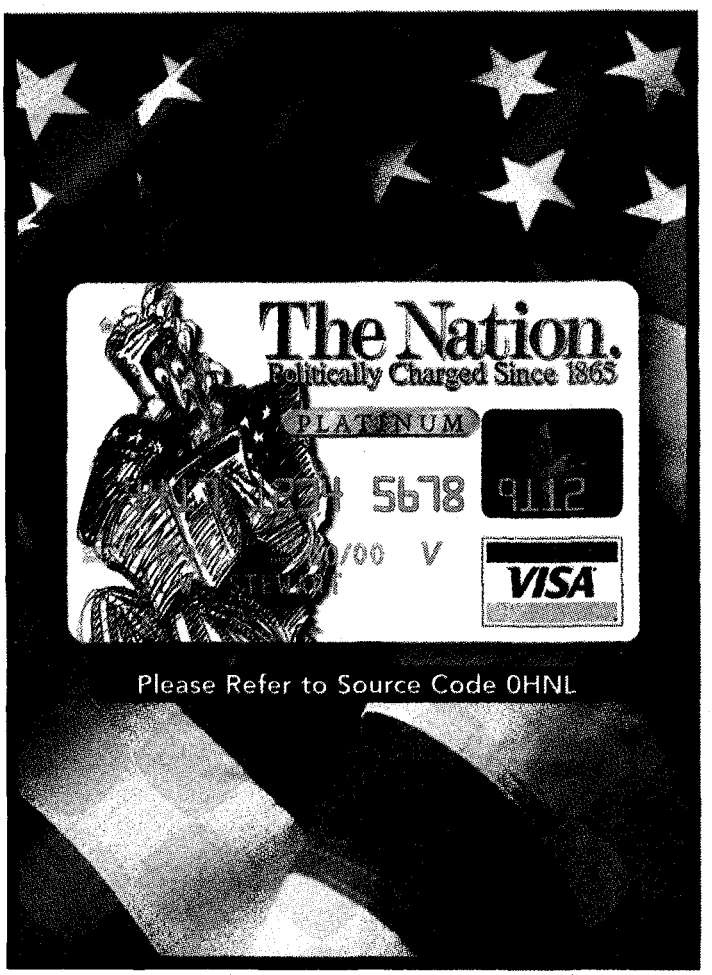

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of the epic *Ramayana* in which the hero Rama's queen is also his sister. Jha certainly explores the eternally sensitive issue of incest in contemporary society as his narrator tells overlapping pieces of the story, and he even throws in a bit of sodomy and pederasty for good measure; but his method is a tabloid-ish piling of sensation upon sensation that might, at best, be an unfortunate outcome of his training as a journalist.

Unlike Chaudhuri, who tries to produce a miniaturist's portrait of Calcutta by adding brush stroke upon brush stroke of minutely observed detail, Jha sets out to write the novel that will lay bare the heart of Calcutta but loses his way in the quagmire of sensational revelations. This is a pity, as the novel has its occasional and redeeming moments of brilliance:

> Just outside the oil mill, a couple of feet to the right of its entrance, were the birds. In a large cage, more like a coop, the kind you see at the Alipore Zoo, slightly smaller, the size of an average storeroom in an average house...people stopped by to look at these dozen birds in the cage.
>
> Flying round and round, grey and white, grey and white. On certain rainy days, when the sky was dark, it seemed tiny clouds had slipped into the cage each dragging with it just a little bit of the sky. And then one afternoon in 1977, the oil mill closed down. Just like that, all of a sudden.

Too bad the novel does not contain more quiet gems like this passage. On the other hand, India has long been imagined as the land of elephants and tigers, jungles and sadhus, snake-charmers and the vanishing-rope trick, so why blame the author for catering to popular fantasies?

If *The Blue Bedspread* is a psychological study, then *A New World* is probably best described as an anthropological exercise. It undoubtedly offers one of the more lyrical descriptions of Bengali life that exists in English fiction. Jayojit's mother is the quintessential Bengali homemaker of a particular generation: She welcomes him home with a fond "You've put on weight, have you" but also reverses herself to "Where—I don't think you've put on weight" when he protests against eating too much. His father, a retired rear admiral and patriot who had sided with the Nationalists against the British, is nonetheless a holdover from the colonial days and eats, brown sahib style, with a fork and spoon. He is the detached head of the family, who still maintains an "inconsequential tyrannical hold over this household, in which usually only he and his wife lived, with part-time servants coming and going each day." Neither parent can quite accept their son's divorce: "they seemed to feel the incompleteness of their family, and that it would not be now complete. Someone was missing. Both mother and father were too hurt to speak of it. In a strange way, they felt abandoned." This feeling of bereftness is perhaps only to be expected. Divorce is still a relatively rare occurrence in India. Not surprisingly, when the parents try to arrange the second marriage for their son, it is to a fellow divorcée. The family doctor gets involved as an intermediary, a situation not unusual in the delicate rituals of matchmaking. She, unlike Jayojit, is childless, a crucial consideration for the still-patriarchal Calcutta society.

On the lighter side, Bengali idiosyncrasies like the obsession with traveling are gleefully dwelt upon. The Admiral's ire against Bangladesh Biman remains unclear till he sardonically observes, "Every week tens of middle-class Bengalis who've been saving up all their lives queue up in the airport to travel by Bangladesh Biman—to visit their son or daughter in England, or to travel: you know the Bengali weakness for 'bhraman'?" referring to the well-known Bengali obsession with globe-trotting. His own projected trip to visit Jayojit had been derailed by his son's divorce. The thankless but socially necessary habit of keeping track of obscure relationships gets some ribbing—"Jayojit's mother's late brother-in-law's niece had a husband whose sister had married Bijon, who himself had no children." And Dr. Sen, the neighbor and friend of the Chatterjees, chuckles over how Bengalis "only come out during the Pujas. Then you'll see them—heh, heh—bowing before Ma Durga!" No believer dares run the risk of offending the goddess who once saved the very gods from calamity.

Chaudhuri's nuanced ear for language is likewise directed at readers familiar with Bengali. Jayojit's mother greets her grandson with a "Esho shona.... Come to thamma." Bonny, who speaks little Bengali, cannot pronounce the hard *th*. "All right, tamma," he says. Unfortunately, not every attempt to transliterate words is equally happy. The phrase "How much" might have been better transcribed as "koto" than "kato," which suggests the Bengali imperative "cut"; and the "Hay" in "Hay bhelpuri" sounds more like the lofty address "O" than "yes." What jars more is Chaudhuri's tendency to italicize words in an attempt to

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convey Bengali speech rhythms—it becomes wearisome. (Unlike English, word stress in Bengali is not predetermined but changes with the speaker.)

While this novel remains a bold attempt to transfer to Indian writing in English some of the characteristics of vernacular literatures, it is not without other, deeper problems. One can, after all, read of beads of moisture condensing on the outside of glasses of cold water and heads of dead fish only so many times before wondering where such aestheticized details lead. Also, given that Dhaka is a half-hour ahead of Calcutta, it's a pity that Chaudhuri's chronological error in claiming that "although they'd [Jayojit and Bonny] left Calcutta at half-past seven, it was still seven-thirty in Bangladesh" was not rectified in the editorial process. On a lesser note, one would also like to quibble over Chaudhuri's referring to *phuchkas* as *golgappas*, a term that is common in Bombay, where Chaudhuri grew up, but which many Calcuttans might not recognize.

Good translations of vernacular Indian writing are scarce in English, but there are several collections of Rabindranath Tagore's fiction available here, the best of which perhaps are those by William Radice and Ketaki Kushari Dyson; *Imaginary Maps: Three Stories by Mahasweta Devi* (translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) offers three tales about tribal women—the most marginalized among the marginal—of a significantly different flavor; and the two-volume *Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Present*, edited by K. Lalita and Susie J. Tharu, is a good anthology for a historical overview, albeit with a gender bias. Nitpicking aside, *A New World* is definitely worth reading. Nowhere close to the best writing available in India's regional languages, it is still a creditable endeavor and should be appreciated as such. ■

Dream Notebook

What will become of these
my many lives,
abandoned each morning abruptly to their own fates?

Of the fox who stopped to look up at me,
bright death stippling her muzzle,
and announced—clearly, simply—"I was hungry"?
Of the engine left half-disassembled,
the unmendable roofleaks, the waiting packed bags?

Cloudbellies of horses drinking at sunset.
Fierce embraces remembered half a day if at all.

Even the bedside jar of minute and actual seashells
wavers and thins—
though each was lifted, chosen,
I no longer recall if it was in joy or distraction,
in foreknowledge or false belief.

How much more elusive, these half-legible scribblings.
If souvenirs at all, they are someone else's.
As each of my memories,
it seems, is destined to be someone else's,

to belong to a woman who
looks faintly like me and whom I wish well,
as one would any stranger passed in a shop, on the street.

Jane Hirshfield

Tom Disch

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Tom Disch is the author of the novels *The Genocides*, *Camp Concentration*, *334*, *On Wings of Song*, *The Businessman: A Tale of Terror*, the children's book *The Brave Little Toaster*, and a book of science fiction criticism, *The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of*. He served as the theater critic at *The Nation* from 1987 through 1991.

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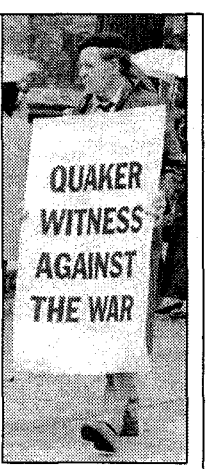

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■ *Nation* writer Marc Cooper's new book, *Pinochet and Me: A Chilean Anti-Memoir*, has been called a "thrilling page-turner" by Kirkus Reviews. You're invited to attend the following public readings and signings: Los Angeles: Wednesday, January 31, 7 PM, Dutton's Books, 11975 San Vicente Blvd., (310) 476-6263. Seattle: Thursday, February 1, 7:30 PM, Elliott Bay Books, 101 S. Main St., (206) 624-6600. Portland: Friday, February 2, 7:30 PM, Powell's Books, 1005 W. Burnside, (503) 228-4657. Santa Cruz: Saturday, February 3, 7:30 PM, Capitola Books Cafe, 1475 41st Ave., (831) 462-4415.

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IN OUR ORBIT

Troops in the Streets

PINOCHET AND ME.
By Marc Cooper. Verso. 143 pp. $22.

Nation contributing editor and radio host Marc Cooper was tossed out of the California State University system for antiwar activities in 1971 by executive order of Governor Ronald Reagan—and ended up in Chile, working as a translator for Salvador Allende. What footnote could be more oddly appropriate in Cooper's memoir *Pinochet and Me*? The book is part diaristic reconstruction of the 1973 coup against Allende, part chronicle of return trips Cooper has made since to Chile and part consideration of that country's—and Pinochet's—fate at century's turn.

Chile "briefly shined as a beacon of inspiration," Cooper laments, the culmination of fifty years of massive campaigning for democratic socialism and the notion that "perhaps, radical social change and resulting improvements in the lives of common people were possible through democratic, peaceful and legal means." His firsthand reporting on the twists and turns of the following quarter-century is by turns chilling and poignant.

Cooper could easily have met the fate of Charles Horman (whom he knew slightly), subject of the film *Missing*; his account of the coup and its aftermath is fraught with chaos, luck and what he calls the "moment of greatest naivety in my adult life"—assuming the US Embassy would be of help. The American consul told Cooper and a few others that "the armed forces are restoring order but there's still a danger of scattered left-wing snipers." Cooper may be the journalistic equivalent of the latter, but the only danger he poses is that he fosters understanding of the social forces at work in the country he has, in more than one sense, married into. His account of returns to Chile first under an assumed name and, years later, under his own, are compelling: an arrest for photographing an army bus that civilians had tied to random shootings; an encounter with youths who say they are hungry and beg for guns; the effects neoliberal economics have wrought on everyday life; the feelings of Chileans on Pinochet's arrest in London. Cooper ends with the inscription on a Chilean memorial to the disappeared: "The forgotten past is full of memory."

5 DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD: Seattle and Beyond.
By Alexander Cockburn, Jeffrey St. Clair and Allan Sekula. Verso. 119 pp. Paper $20.

What we saw in Seattle across those tumultuous days stretching from November 28 through December 3, 1999, and then in Davos, Switzerland, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Prague was the flowering of a new radical movement in America and across the world, rambunctious, anarchic, internationalist, well informed and in some ways more imaginative and supple than kindred popular eruptions in recent decades," write *Nation* columnist Alexander Cockburn and his co-authors in this eyewitness chronicle of protests against the WTO and other institutions of the new global economic order. The authors have keen eyes for the social ironies surrounding the events: Jeffrey St. Clair's Seattle diary observes not just the segregation of the city's high-tech opulence from south Seattle's old-economy piers and pulp and chemical factories but an account of an officer frisking a woman whose boyfriend was walking her home from work. Just before unloading his pepper spray on her escort, the policeman tells her, "You've no idea what we've been through today." Protest experience at the Democratic National Convention left the authors concluding as well that "America is moving toward the normalization of paramilitary forces in law enforcement." Winking at the old journalistic saw of quoting taxi drivers to get the street pulse, *Nation* contributor and former senior editor JoAnn Wypijewski, whose DC diary of World Bank and IMF protests is included, quotes an Ethiopian driver: "What is going on is simply the recolonization of the so-called developing world." Adds another: "This is why we are taxi drivers."

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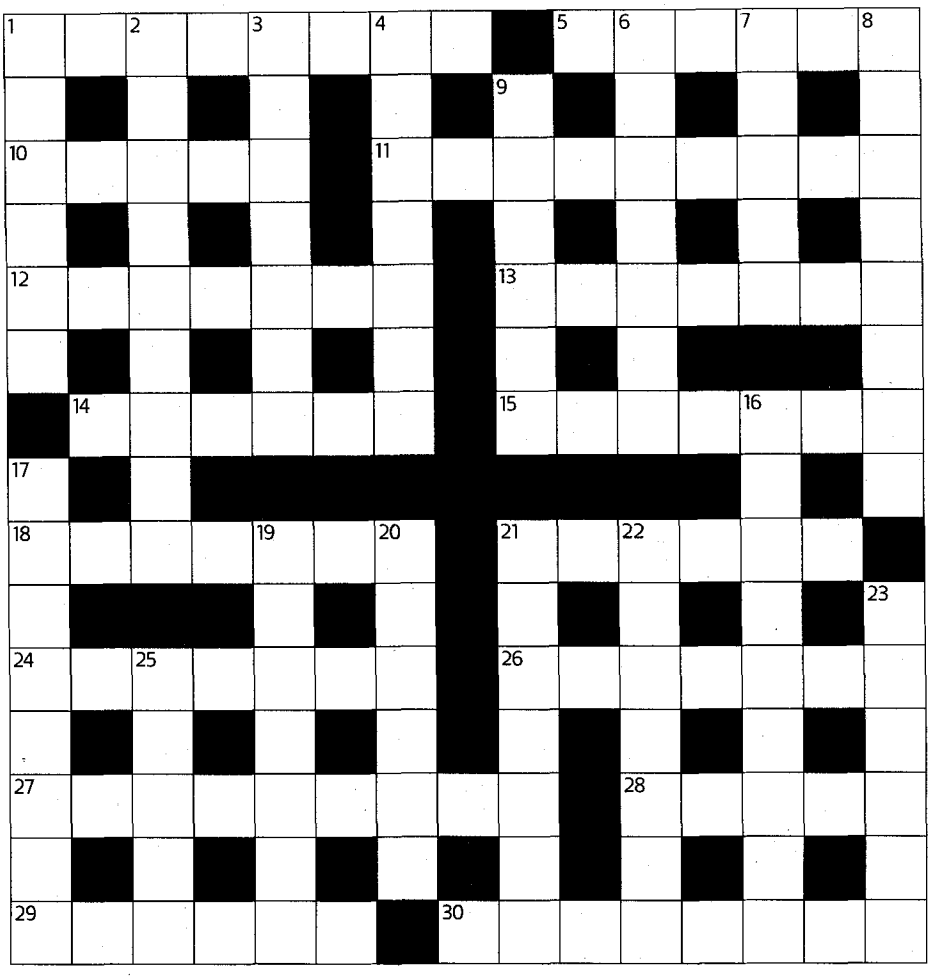

ACROSS

1 and **5** Canine—the shy type! (Don't pull such a bloomer!) (8,6)

10 Sometimes said to be pressed by the overeager when they feel shaky? (5)

11 This might tell you if you have the right angle on something—otherwise attempt to settle things with someone. (3,6)

12 Perhaps piles on a letter from Athens. (7)

13 Rip the letters of the marker to form part of it at least. (7)

14 Often played but not as a literal presentation. (6)

15 Rather new, and in Paris the water level rises with it. (7)

18 Deer family members found in Indiana. (7)

21 Does publicity sometimes seem to get stuck in it, though we look up to things this way? (6)

24 It sounds like they went away in song, but if you're in deep they might offer some fast assistance. (7)

26 A variety of roses as found in very cold environment. (4,3)

27 Well, at least all people are not detested if you do, though it's a pretty awful description! (9)

28 Responsible for a possible hitch in your travel plans? (5)

29 and **30** Not exactly a soft-shoe shuffle made by it, but it was important to religious conservatives some time ago. (6,8)

DOWN

1 See 21 down

2 Certainly not an exact way to reach a conclusion, being the job of an uncertain seer! (9)

3 Was she responsible for a false hope, bringing up trouble this way… (7)

4 …with another of the Bard's women being large and strong with first-class upbringing. (7)

6 Ask how you might purchase the paper? (7)

7 Nash said a three-L one was a bad bet! What a beast! (5)

8 and **23** Not a conventional color for a small car, though it's the one seen going down the hole. (3,5,6)

9 If E were I this could be flimsy, but I say I'm all alone this way. (6)

16 A difficult dish for the cook to prepare, but it covers the dessert course, perhaps. (4,5)

17 Did Mozart's precursor to *Kidnapped* get the women from here, or is a leg broken by it? (8)

19 What scoffers ask you to tell them. (7)

20 Artist who has to sit up with a heavy drinker? (6)

21 and **1** Sounds somewhat like an oxymoron but might be expressed by "eager." (5,2,6)

22 An early bagpipe or what it might be carried in? (Not a full-fledged type, like Erato!) (7)

23 See 8

25 Tease someone about being rather husky? (5)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, *The Nation*, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our Web site at www.thenation.com/print/hints.

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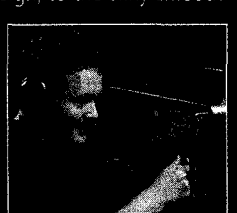

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